CONTEMPLATIONS AND MEDITATIONS

(Public Life of our Lord)

GEO. W. J. GOLDWELL, PRINTER, GALT.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/contemplationsme0001sist

✠

A. M. D. G.

CONTEMPLATIONS AND MEDITATIONS ON THE PUBLIC LIFE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

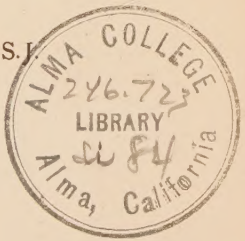
ACCORDING TO THE METHOD OF ST. IGNATIUS

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY A SISTER OF MERCY

REVISED BY

REV. W. J. AMHERST, S.J.



VOL. I

LONDON: BURNS OATES & WASHBOURNE, LIMITED
28 ORCHARD ST., W.1. 8-10 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.4.
and at MANCHESTER, BIRMINGHAM AND GLASGOW
1923

44458

Made and Printed in Great Britain.

CONTEMPLATIONS AND MEDITATIONS

ON THE

PUBLIC LIFE OF OUR LORD.

FIRST MEDITATION.

THE PREACHING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST.

'The word of the Lord was made unto John the son of Zachary in the desert. And he came into all the country about the Jordan, preaching the baptism of penance for the remission of sins.'—LUKE iii. 2, 3.

Preparatory Prayer.—Grant, O my God, that during this meditation all my actions, all my intentions, and all the operations of my soul, may tend purely and solely to Thy service and the glory of Thy divine Majesty.

Come ! Holy Ghost, fill the hearts of Thy faithful, and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

Send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let us Pray.

O God, Who hast instructed the hearts of the faithful by the light of the Holy Spirit, grant us also the gift of the same Spirit, that we may love and relish what is good, and evermore rejoice in His divine consolations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hail Mary, etc.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the desert of Jude beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

2*nd Prelude.*—Never permit me, O my God, to resemble the many unhappy beings who harden their hearts against the warnings of Thy ministers, and thus cause them to become useless to them.

1*st Point.*—What are the dispositions of those who listen to John the Baptist?

John the Baptist announces to the world the greatest of all news, that of its approaching redemption; he exhorts the people to prepare themselves by penance for this inestimable benefit; how are his warnings received? We may divide those who listen to him into four classes: that of hypocrites, of the indifferent, of the inconstant, and of the faithful. The hypocrites, governed by pride, belong for the most part to the Pharisaical sects; they only come to hear John the Baptist for fear of prepossessing against themselves the people, whose esteem the holy Precursor has gained; and they leave him still more hardened in sin than before they had listened to him. The indifferent listen to him, but without fruit, on account of their apathy and listlessness, a disposition which renders them guilty because they could overcome it. The inconstant listen and are moved, but forget their good resolutions when an occasion offers because they neglect the only two means of perseverance, viz., vigilance and prayer. The faithful alone, that is to say, sinners truly converted, and fervent souls profit by the warnings of the holy Precursor, and thus prepare to receive the favours of Jesus. If I had lived at that time, to which of these four classes should I have belonged? Or rather, to which one do I now belong? for the ministers of God even now warn us to prepare for the coming of the Lord.

2*nd Point.*—What is the penance preached by John the Baptist?

In what consists the penance the holy Precursor preaches? He points it out to us when he says: 'Every

valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways plain' (Luke iii. 5). We must then fill up the valleys, which typify the depths of our miseries, by tears and satisfactions and holy desires, which raise the soul to God; we must lower every mountain and hill of pride; we must make straight the crooked and rough way of a doubtful conscience or divided intention; next we must divest ourselves of all those sallies of character and temper, which, like so many hedges of thorns and briars, render us troublesome to others; in a word, we must undertake the entire renovation of ourselves. This undertaking is great and demands courage, for it supposes prolonged and difficult efforts; but, if the difficulty affrights us, let us look forward to the happy termination of our efforts.

The end is the plenitude of those graces our divine Redeemer comes to bestow; His knowledge, His love, the most intimate communications of His Sacred Heart according to the words added by His holy Precursor: 'And all flesh shall behold the salvation of God' (Luke iii. 6).

Colloquy with God the Father, thanking Him for preparing the way for His Son, and for consenting to give Him to the world. *With Jesus:* He is still concealed, but soon will appear on earth. Let us beg of Him to prepare us Himself for the divine lessons He is about to teach us, and for the graces He will shortly pour out upon us. Let us promise Him to neglect nothing on our part in order to acquire that compunction of heart and preparation of good works preached by His holy Precursor.

Resolutions.—To combat in a spirit of expiation and renovation that defect which makes us commit most faults, offering to God the trouble and difficulties of the combat.

Offering of the Resolutions.—My God, I offer Thee these resolutions; unless Thou dost deign to bless them, I cannot be faithful to them; from Thy goodness then I

hope to obtain this blessing, which I ask of Thee in the name and through the merits of Jesus, my divine Saviour.

Holy Virgin, Mother of my God, and also my Mother, my good Angel and holy patron Saint, obtain for me the grace to keep these resolutions with perfect fidelity.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Do penance, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand' (Matt. iii. 2).

Prayer.—Pater Noster, etc.

Examen of the Meditation.—Did I carefully prepare the points of my meditation, and resolve on the fruit I would draw from it? Did I recall it to my mind before I went to sleep? Did I, from the moment of awaking, occupy myself with it, to the exclusion of every other thought? Did I place myself as I ought to do in the presence of God? Did I make the preparatory prayer and the preludes? Did I preserve a becoming reverence in my attitude? Have I not passed lightly from one point to another? Have I reflected on the mystery before me with a sincere desire of profiting by it? Have I made the colloquies, asking for grace to practise the virtue that God set before me? Have I made resolutions for the day, determining on the opportunities when I would reduce them to practice? Have I made a Spiritual Bouquet?

SECOND MEDITATION.

THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—'Jesus came from Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan; and forthwith, being come out of the water, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending as a dove and coming upon Him. And behold a voice from Heaven saying: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased' (Matt. iii. 13, *et seq.*).

2nd Prelude.—Represent to yourself Judea, and the Jordan, where Jesus was baptized.

3rd Prelude.—My adorable Master, I beg of you to purify my soul entirely, and to apply to it all the fruits of the great mystery I am about to contemplate.

1st Point.—Consider the Persons. Jesus, Who presents Himself for baptism. He is our God, our Saviour, our Master, and our Model. All in Him breathes forth humility, modesty, and meekness. His Sacred Heart is full of zeal for the work He is soon to undertake. Then let us behold John the Baptist; the skin of a camel serves him for a garment. He is also so humble, so meek and modest. What respect he exhibits towards Jesus! It is because he recognises Him through a supernatural light. Different groups of people are assembled on the banks of the Jordan. Some appear filled with compunction. Others have an air of indifference. Others again observe with curiosity what is going on.

2nd Point.—Listen to the words. Jesus demands baptism. The holy Precursor excuses himself. 'What! O Lord,' he exclaims: 'I ought to be baptized by Thee, and comest Thou to me?' 'Suffer it to be so,' replies Jesus, 'for so it becometh us to fulfil all justice' (Matt. iii. 13-15). How, then, my divine Master, is it just that Thou shouldst confound Thyself with sinners? Thou Who art sanctity itself? Yes, this is just, since Jesus is the victim of sin. But as for me, can I accomplish all justice when I seek to avoid humiliation? Jesus has received baptism; His Father renders unto Him this testimony: 'This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased' (Matt. iii. 17). O blessed Father! What a Master Thou givest to man!

3rd Point.—Consider the actions. Jesus comes forward and solicits baptism; it is the first action of His public life; it is worthy of the Master of humility. The humility also which fills the heart of St. John the Baptist, raises a sort of combat between the Master and

His disciple. The latter yields through obedience. Jesus is baptized. His divine Father renders in His favour a glorious testimony, in which the adorable Divinity manifests itself most plainly.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Adore Him as the Author of all sanctity, Who has deigned to become the Model of sinners. Ask of Him a right understanding of the mysteries of humility and love contained in the mystery of His baptism. Beg of Him the grace to fulfil, like unto Him, all justice, by the accomplishment of the Divine Will. Humble yourself for your past conduct. Promise Him renewed fidelity. Implore in particular all the requisite graces for this.

Resolutions.—We may make them on humility; or, on gratitude towards God.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Thou art My beloved Son.'

Prayer.—Pater Noster, etc.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

THIRD MEDITATION.

APPLICATION OF THE SENSES.
(THE SAME SUBJECT.)

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

Preludes.—The same as in the preceding contemplation.

1*st Point.*—Sight. Consider anew with attention Jesus coming to demand baptism with humility, and receiving it with modesty. Behold how St. John the Baptist is penetrated with religious respect while in the act of baptizing Him, the latchet of Whose shoe he did not deem himself worthy to loose. Consider also the crowd of beholders; the different dispositions of those who compose it are easily distinguished.

2nd Point.—Hearing. Listen anew to the words as spoken in the preceding contemplation; unite thereunto the interior acts of thanksgiving of Jesus, Whose Sacred Heart is replenished with joy in commencing His career of zeal. John the Baptist, at the same time that he baptizes our Lord, adores Him. Hearken also to the confused noise of the pressing crowd, and then to the silence of astonishment; which, doubtless, the voice from Heaven occasioned.

3rd Point.—Taste. Experience the fervent, humble, and religious feelings of Jesus and of John the Baptist. Also the compunction of the true penitents assembled together on the banks of the Jordan, and the holy fear with which the voice of God inspires them.

4th Point.—Smell. Inhale the odour of penance which arises on all sides. The perfumes of meekness, humility, obedience, the love of God, and zeal for His glory, which is diffused around by Jesus and His holy Precursor.

5th Point.—Touch. Let us follow our dear Saviour into those waters which His divine Person is about to sanctify. Let us beg of Him to administer unto us a baptism of grace, which will entirely renew us.

Colloquy, Resolutions, Offering of the Resolutions, Spiritual Bouquet, Prayer, Examen of the Meditation, according to the preceding meditation.

FOURTH MEDITATION.

JESUS THE WELL-BELOVED SON OF THE FATHER.

'This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.'—MATT. iii. 17.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1st Prelude.—Again represent to yourself the Jordan, where Jesus receives baptism; its banks are covered with people.

2nd Prelude.—'Holy Father, this is eternal life, to know Thee and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent' (John xvii. 1-3). Discover to me the depths of that love which made Thee give Thy well-beloved Son to man, and also the amiability of that Son, the only worthy object of all our love.

1st Point.—Jesus the well-beloved Son of God is given to us.

'This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased' (Matt. iii. 17).

Such is the testimony given by God the Father of His Son at the moment He is on the point of manifesting Him on earth. This Heavenly Father wishes us to understand the greatness of the inestimable gift He is bestowing on us. Oh, how precious is this gift of His infinite charity! It is not merely an angel, a prince of His heavenly court, He sends to instruct and save us; it is His well-beloved Son, the only object of His divine complacency. Oh, how worthy of our respect and veneration, of our obedience and our love, is this Son of the Father, this Messias so long desired, and so long called for; this Master of truth, this Fountain of grace, this new Adam who comes to repair so nobly and with such advantage to us the fault of the first Adam! Am I penetrated with the most lively gratitude to this Heavenly Father, and with the highest esteem and most profound respect for the Word made man, the Son of His predilection? Am I completely docile towards a Master who merits this of me on so many titles?

2nd Point.—Jesus, the well-beloved Son of the Father, is worthy of all our love.

God the Father has given us His only Son; Jesus has given Himself to us; what other object is more worthy than He is to fill our heart? What is required to gain this heart? An amiable and winning exterior? Jesus is 'most beautiful above the sons of men; grace is poured abroad on His lips' (Ps. xliv. 3); persuasion accom-

panies His words. If the gifts of mind and heart seem preferable to the above, 'Jesus possesses all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge' (Col. ii. 3); 'He is meek and humble of heart' (Matt. xi. 29); 'He has loved us with an everlasting love' (Jeremias xxxi. 3)—with a generous love, for 'no man hath a greater love than to lay down his life for his friends' (John xv. 13)—with a communicative love, 'I am come,' said He, 'to cast fire on the earth, and what do I desire but that it be enkindled?' (Luke xii. 49). Let us unite to all these amiable qualities of Jesus all the attributes of the Godhead, the plenitude of which dwells in Him corporally (Col. ii. 9). Let us add to these again His titles of Saviour, of Father, of Physician, of Protector, of King, of Master, of Brother, of Friend, of Spouse, and of so many others which He has not disdained to assume in our regard. Is it not true that He merits a love infinitely greater than the love of which our poor heart is capable? Let us try to penetrate our souls to the very centre with these considerations; let us beg this good Jesus to penetrate us with them as He penetrates the freshly delved earth with the falling rain. May His love pierce us through and become one with our very being, to the end that, considering Him at one time as our Doctor and Lawgiver, at another as our Model, again as our Benefactor, our Friend, our Father, we may be ready by this preparation of love to listen to Him, to imitate Him, and to serve Him faithfully.

Colloquy with God the Father, to adore Him, and thank Him for the inestimable gift which He has bestowed on us in giving us His only Son.

With Jesus, to bless Him also for having given Himself to us. To beg of Him to replenish us with His love. Let us humble ourselves and express some regret for the many obstacles His love has found in us up to the present. Let us implore our good Lord to triumph to-day over our hearts by His grace, and to render Himself their Master both for time and eternity.

Resolutions.—To think from time to time on the loving qualities of Jesus, begging Him to fill our hearts with His holy love.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Thou art My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased' (Luke iii. 22).

Prayer.—Pater Noster, etc.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FIFTH MEDITATION.

TEMPTATION OF JESUS CHRIST.

'Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil.'—MATT. iv. 1.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the desert of Judea, where Jesus retires.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant me grace, O my Saviour, to draw advantage from my temptations by my fidelity in making use of the means Thy example points out to me, in order to ensure their efficacy.

1*st Point.*—The temptations of Jesus encourage us.

Why did our Adorable Master permit the wicked spirit to dare to approach and tempt Him? Because, clothed in our fallen nature, through His love for us, He willed to submit to all its miseries, sin excepted. He knew how painful and humiliating temptation is: He would submit to it, that so in future those who should experience its assaults should not be discouraged, but have recourse to Him with entire confidence. Again, He would teach us, that temptation does not injure those who resist it, but, on the contrary, confirms them in virtue. He would further show us in His own conduct the example we ought to follow in such difficulties. What gratitude should not such great goodness inspire me with!

2nd Point.—The temptations of Jesus instruct us.

How does Jesus, our divine Model, prepare Himself for temptation? How does He resist it? He prepares Himself for it by fasting, prayer, and retreat. An immortified soul, thoughtless and negligent at prayer, is little prepared to sustain the assaults of the enemy. The moment of attack has arrived. Satan commences only in an indirect manner, according to his custom in regard to the just: 'If Thou be the Son of God,' said he to Christ, 'command that these stones be made bread' (Matt. iv. 3), but Jesus answered him, saying, 'It is written, Not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God' (Matt. iv. 4). Thus should we repulse even the shadow of evil by a firm resistance of the first attacks. The tempter changes his tactics: he carries our divine Master to the pinnacle of the temple, and says to Him, 'Cast Thyself down, for it is written that He hath given His angels charge over Thee, and in their hands shall they bear Thee up, lest perhaps Thou dash Thy foot against a stone' (Matt. iv. 6). The first temptation flattered sensuality; the present one pride. The enemy of all good is not ignorant that this detestable vice remains yet in those souls who have escaped from the slavery of the senses. Jesus overthrows him anew by His answer, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God' (Matt. iv. 7), teaching us that humility is the only means of preserving the gift of God and meriting His help. Lastly, Satan takes our Lord to the top of a very high mountain, and there craftily shows Him an enticing image of all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them; he does not hesitate to propose to the Son of God to fall down and adore him, promising Him in return the possession of all these. What an impostor—he has nothing, and he promises everything. Jesus repulses with horror this third temptation. 'Be gone, Satan,' He says to him, 'for it is written, The Lord thy God shalt thou adore, and Him only shalt thou serve' (Matt. iv. 10). Then Satan, full of confusion,

left Him, and angels came and ministered to our divine Master. Thus a temptation in which we have been victorious is ever followed by the visit of angels, even by the King of Angels Himself, with the abundance of His graces. Oh! how advantageous it is, then, to us to resist the attacks of the enemy. With what vigilance ought I not to watch and pray in order to triumph over all his assaults!

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the Saint of Saints, infinitely opposed to sin, and incapable of committing it. Let us thank Him for having submitted to temptation for the love of us. Let us humble ourselves for having been so negligent up to the present in imitating His example on this point. Let us promise Him to be no longer so careless, and implore of Him the abundant graces necessary for this end.

Resolutions.—To combat temptations with courage and confidence in the presence of Jesus.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Watch ye, and pray, that ye enter not into temptation' (Matt. xxvi. 41).

Prayer.

Soul of Christ, be my Sanctification;
Body of Christ, be my Salvation;
Blood of Christ, fill all my veins;
Water of Christ's side, wash out my stains;
Passion of Christ, my comfort be.
O good Jesus, listen to me:
In Thy Wounds I fain would hide,
Ne'er to be parted from Thy side.
Guard me should the foe assail me;
Call me when my life shall fail me;
Bid me come to Thee above,
With Thy Saints to sing Thy love,
World without end. Amen.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SIXTH MEDITATION.

JESUS TOO LITTLE KNOWN BY MEN.

'The Jews sent to Jerusalem Priests and Levites to ask of John: Who art thou? . . . And he confessed, I am not the Christ . . . but there hath stood one in the midst of you whom you know not.'—JOHN i. 19-26.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the borders of the Jordan opposite to the side which led to the desert.

2*nd Prelude.*—Deign, O my divine Master, to manifest Thyself to me interiorly; grant that I may know Thee; enkindle Thy love within my soul, that I may reap therefrom all the fruits of Thy holy presence within me.

1*st Point.*—Jesus is little known by men.

'There has stood one in the midst of you whom you know not' (John i. 26). This divine Unknown, here pointed out by St. John the Baptist, is the Eternal Word, the Light of the world, come down from Heaven to show us the way to it; no sooner does this Teacher of truth begin to show Himself, than the heads of the nation begin to close their eyes. Happy had they been if they had not carried their first resistance to grace yet further still, if they had not verified, as they did later on, those words of our Saviour: 'Every one that doth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reproved' (John iii. 20).

Alas! The same deplorable blindness is to be found in our days. How many are there not on the earth who know not Jesus Christ! He is in the midst of us, through His Church, which represents Him to us, instructs us in His doctrine, bestows on us His Sacraments. He is with us in the holy Eucharist, which is reserved in our cities, even close to our dwellings. He is ever ready to enter

into our hearts, if we will but receive Him; and yet how few know Him! Might not the inscription be written on the doors of the tabernacles, which St. Paul found at Athens: 'To the unknown God'? (Acts xvii. 23). Do we not see verified in our days, as formerly, the words of the beloved disciple: 'He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not; He came unto His own, and His own received Him not' (John i. 10, 11)? Ah! we at least are happy enough to know Him; we know Him to be 'Christ the Son of the living God' (Matt. xvi. 16). Let us try to indemnify Him for so much indifference; let us endeavour to extend His knowledge and His love; we shall receive, as the recompense of our zeal, that spiritual intelligence which Jesus communicates to His true friends; He has promised it Himself when He said: 'Give, and it shall be given to you' (Luke vi. 38).

2nd Point.—Jesus is little known, even by those who make profession of serving Him.

The knowledge of Jesus is not only the beginning of salvation, it is still more the foundation and principle of all perfection. By it the Saints have been led to and have advanced in the interior life; since the latter is nothing else than the knowledge of Jesus and union with Him, through the conformity of the affections with His; also of the will and its works with His; which caused our divine Lord to say: 'Father, this is eternal life, to know Thee . . . and Jesus Christ Whom Thou hast sent' (John xvii. 3). Oh! how worthy of being sought after is this interior and practical knowledge of Jesus; it is the treasure hidden in the Gospel, which deserves to be purchased at any sacrifice; it is the precious pearl, for the gaining of which the wise merchant abandons all else. Yet, who would believe it? This inestimable treasure is within our reach, and we do not care to acquire it. Jesus is in the midst of us, and we 'know Him not' (John i. 26). What does He require from us, that we may know Him?

A generous and persevering fidelity. Shall I not for the future apply myself to acquire this?

Colloquy with our Divine Saviour.—Let us thank Him for the numberless wonders He has worked, that He might come in the midst of us by His incarnation, and remain with us in the adorable Sacrament of the altar.

Let us pray for those miserable souls who refuse to know Him. Let us humble ourselves in His holy presence for knowing Him so little after the many special graces with which He has overwhelmed us. Let us make Him all the promises and requests our heart shall suggest for this end.

Resolutions.—To recollect ourselves frequently, and think of Jesus, asking His grace to know Him well. To be faithful in practising the acts of those virtues His inspirations may suggest unto us.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—He is in the midst of us, and we 'know Him not' (John i. 26).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SEVENTH MEDITATION.

JESUS THE LAMB OF GOD.

'The next day John saw Jesus coming to him, and he saith: Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who taketh away the sin of the world.'—JOHN i. 29.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 13.

2*nd Prelude.*—Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, deign to make me sensible of the effects of Thy goodness, in applying to my soul the fruits of Thy divine sacrifice.

1*st Point.*—Jesus is a Lamb by His meekness and mildness.

Meekness is one of the principal features pointed out by the prophets as a characteristic of the Messias. Isaias had said of Him, 'He shall not cry out, neither shall His voice be heard abroad. The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench' (Is. xlii. 2, 3). These prophecies were entirely fulfilled: 'Jesus went about doing good to all' (Acts x. 38). He proved still more by His actions than by His words that He preferred mercy to sacrifice (Matt. ix. 13); and when the indignant Pharisees reproached Him with conversing familiarly with sinners, and even eating at their table, He gave them this answer, so worthy of the tenderness of His Sacred Heart: 'They that are in health need not a physician, but they that are ill' (Matt. ix. 12). Such is the character of Jesus, that meek Lamb destined for the great sacrifice which was to reconcile Heaven with earth; His meekness appeared above all in His Passion: it was then that, not content with keeping silence, He let Himself be led 'as a sheep to the slaughter, and was as a lamb before His shearers' (Isaias liii. 7) and murderers; He carried His meekness so far as to pray for His executioners. Oh! how greatly ought this goodness of Jesus to excite my confidence! Above all, how greatly it ought to animate me to be meek and forbearing towards others!

2nd Point.—Jesus the Lamb of God is the victim Whose precious Blood purifies us from all our sins.

'Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who taketh away the sin of the world' (John i. 29). Jesus alone could satisfy for us to the justice of His Father. He has done so in so perfect a manner, that the superabundance of His merits is an inexhaustible treasure, in which all the sinners of every period may regain their innocence as often as they are truly penitent. His divine Blood has been shed to wash away all kinds of stains; it was in virtue of this adorable Blood that God the Father said by the mouth of His prophet: 'As often as the sinner shall

detest his iniquities and be converted to Me, as I live, saith the Lord, I will show mercy to him' (Ezech. xxxiii. 11-16). Not content with forgetting his iniquities, He says: 'That I may put them away, I will cast them into the bottom of the sea' (Mich. vii. 19); 'and though they be as red as scarlet, they shall become as white as snow' (Isaias i. 18). Oh, infinite merits of the Blood of my Jesus! Oh, mercies of my God! Thou dost deserve all my gratitude. Jesus, Divine Lamb, Who didst become a victim for me, how can I refrain from detesting sin, since it caused Thy death?

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the true Lamb of God, the only victim worthy of His notice. Let us bless Him, with all the gratitude of which we are capable, for the sacrifice, so painful for Him and so advantageous for us, which He has consummated on the Cross. Let us beg of Him to apply the fruits thereof to our souls, by helping us to immolate in return every obstacle in our hearts to the perfect reign of His grace.

Resolutions.—To sacrifice to Jesus Christ the inclinations and repugnances which may oppose the accomplishment of our duties.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Lamb of God Who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us!'

Prayer.—Pater Noster, etc.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

EIGHTH CONTEMPLATION

THE MARRIAGE-FEAST OF CANA.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—'There was a marriage in Cana of Galilee, and the Mother of Jesus was there. And Jesus also was invited with His disciples to the marriage. And the wine failing, the Mother of Jesus saith to Him: They have no

wine. Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of the purifying of the Jews. Jesus saith to them : Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.' And the water was changed into wine (John ii. 1-7).

2nd Prelude.—Represent to yourself the festal hall.

3rd Prelude.—Deign, Lord Jesus, to operate within my soul the miracles of peace proportioned to my wants. This favour I beg of Thee through the intercession of Thy holy Mother.

1st Point.—Consider the persons. Jesus, full of gentleness and kindness, Who does not disdain to share in the innocent happiness of the bride and bridegroom and their guests. Mary : her perfect modesty is accompanied with so much affability, that she inspires with confidence all who behold her. Let us behold the guests, giving themselves up to cheerfulness, but without intemperance or transgressing the bounds of modesty. The newly married, who are doing the honours of the feast, on a sudden appear greatly embarrassed, for there is not enough wine.

2nd and 3rd Points.—Listen to the words and consider the actions. The hosts, not knowing what to do, consult Mary in secret, who, addressing herself to her Jesus, said : 'They have no wine' (John ii. 3). She does not add another word, persuaded that Jesus both understands and compassionates with herself the embarrassment of the newly married. In effect, she is heard, although she has only asked indirectly. But Jesus, wishing to give us a salutary lesson, seems at first to disregard her request, saying : 'Woman, what is it to Me and to thee ? My hour is not yet come' (John ii.). Mary, too well grounded in sincere humility, and too sure of the Heart of her Son to let herself be troubled by such an answer, said to the waiters : 'Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye' (John ii.). Let us receive with respect these words of our holy Mother, since they are spoken also for us. 'Fill the waterpots with water,' said Jesus, and they obeyed (John ii. 7).

'Draw out now,' He added, 'and carry to the chief steward of the feast,' and they did so (John ii. 8). Let us listen to the words in which the chief steward manifests his astonishment, then to the discourses held by the witnesses of the miracle regarding the divinity of Jesus Christ.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the Master of miracles. Let us thank Him for having commenced to manifest Himself to His disciples. Let us beg of Him to manifest Himself also to our hearts, by working in us prodigies of grace. Let us exhibit before Him, through the medium of Mary, the wants of our soul, deprived of the wine of charity and of all other virtues. Let us humbly acknowledge that we are unworthy to be the recipients of a miracle, yet soliciting this favour for the glory of Jesus.

Resolutions.—Often to have recourse to Jesus through His blessed Mother, in order to obtain of Him that He would deign to work in our soul the changes He knows it requires.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—O Mary, help of Christians, pray for us!

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

NINTH MEDITATION.

VOCATION OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES.

'Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother . . . and He said to them, Follow Me . . . and going on from thence He saw two other brethren, James and John, the sons of Zebedee . . . and He called them. And they forthwith left all and followed Him.' —MATT. iv. 12-22.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the borders of the sea of Galilee.

2nd Prelude.—Grant, O my God, that I may understand the inestimable value of my vocation to Christianity, that so I may correspond with it gratefully and lovingly.

1st Point.—Jesus is the first to call us. We are not told in the Gospel that the disciples admitted to follow Jesus to-day had asked that favour of Him, or that they had deserved it by any important services. No, it was their divine Master who called them first. And it is thus He acts toward all men; it is of faith that no one can merit the first grace necessary to belong to Jesus Christ. We must first be attracted by His loving invitations. What goodness! Have I ever reflected seriously thereon? It is Jesus Who has forestalled me, and called me to His service; His sacred Heart chose me, and adopted me for His own from my mother's womb. The sacred waters of baptism made me His child, before I was capable of desiring, or even appreciating the august title. What gratitude do I not owe Him for such immense favour? Can I be insensible? Can I not exclaim with the Apostle: 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with spiritual blessings for heavenly things' (Eph. i. 3). Again, can I not exclaim with the Prophet King: 'I will bless the Lord at all times, His praise shall be ever in my mouth' (Ps. lxxxviii. 2). 'The mercies of the Lord I will sing for ever' (Ps. xxxiii. 2).

2nd Point.—We ought to respond to the call of Jesus.

The disciples, hearing the voice of the divine Master calling them, 'left all,' the Scriptures tell us, 'and followed Him' (Matt. iv. 22). The grace of Jesus anticipates the will of man, but does not force it. We are always free to follow it, or to resist it. Alas! what sad experiences have proved this truth! How many unhappy individuals have been called to know and serve God, and have hardened their hearts that they might not hear His voice! Greater still the number of those engaged in His

service by the happy circumstances of their birth and an early fidelity, who have afterwards lost the grace of their adoption, and have turned the inestimable blessing into a subject for their more rigorous condemnation! Let us profit by their example, and understand well, that in order to ensure our salvation, we must 'walk worthy of the vocation in which we are called' (Eph. iv. 1). We must clearly understand that to be the disciples of Jesus, we must renounce ourselves, carry our cross and follow Him. We contracted this solemn engagement at our baptism, and our divine Lord binds Himself to recognise us as His own at the last day, only on condition that we, on our part, fulfil our promises.

Colloquy with God the Father, to bless Him, with heartfelt gratitude, for deigning to call us to the grace of Baptism, preferably to so many others, who perhaps would have profited better by it. *With Jesus*, our adorable Master, to humble ourselves for the infidelities we have committed against our sacred engagements. Let us renew them at His feet, and implore the help we need to guard them for the future with renewed fervour.

Resolutions.—To renew the promises of our Baptism several times in the day, and offer to our Lord some acts of the virtue we most need, in thanksgiving for our vocation to Christianity.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you' (John xv. 16).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

TENTH MEDITATION.

THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISH.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—'And it came to pass that when the multitude pressed upon Jesus to hear the word of God, He stood by the lake of Genesareth. And He saw two ships standing by the lake. And entering into one of them that was Simon's, sitting, He taught the multitude out of the ship. And when He had ceased to speak He said to Simon: Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. . . . And when they had done this, they enclosed a very great multitude of fishes, and their net broke' (Luke v. 1-5).

2*nd Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the shore of the lake of Genesareth, covered with an immense multitude of people; then the lake and Simon's ship, from which Jesus was teaching them.

3*rd Prelude.*—O Lord Jesus, grant me the two-fold grace of a confiding faith and a sincere humility, that so I may never put any obstacle to the accomplishment of Thy divine Will in my regard.

1*st Point.*—Consider the persons. Jesus resplendent with grace and majesty. He speaks, and the sweet unction of His words attracts all hearts. . . Behold the crowd listening to Him, pressing forward, and increasing rapidly. Simon is there, and his companions listening also to their divine Master.

2*nd Point.*—Listen to the words. Joining the crowd, lend an attentive ear to the instructions of Jesus: then, when He has dismissed the people, remain and hear the command He gives to Peter: 'Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a draught' (Luke v. 4). What is Thy motive, O Jesus? Peter is ignorant of it, nevertheless he obeys. . . 'Master,' says he, 'we have laboured

all night and have taken nothing, but at Thy word I will let down the net' (Luke v. 5). His faith and obedience are rewarded by a miracle. . . His humility is alarmed at it, and he cries out: 'Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man' (Luke v. 8). This disposition gains for him the Sacred Heart of his divine Master. 'Fear not,' He says to him, 'from henceforth thou shalt catch men' (Luke v. 10).

3rd Point.—Consider the actions. The kindness with which Jesus instructs the people—the order He afterwards gives to Peter to let down his nets—the miraculous draught of fish which prefigures the success of the preaching of the Gospel . . . the testimonies of the faith and humility of Peter, prostrate at the feet of his divine Master, Who reassures him with kindness, and confirms him in his high vocation.

Colloquy with our Lord. To adore Him as the Teacher of truth, and as the God to Whom miracles belong . . . as the Master of all hearts, Who calls whom He chooses, and makes use of the weakest of His creatures to accomplish His greatest designs, provided He finds them possessed of obedience and humility. Let us bless Him for having deigned to found His Church for the salvation and happiness of men . . . and for having made us children of this holy Church. Let us beg of Him by His grace to place in our soul the same dispositions He found in St. Peter, that so, like this Apostle, we may serve the designs of His mercy.

Resolutions—To confide in God in our failures, and humble ourselves in success.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Without Me ye can do nothing,' (John xv. 5).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

ELEVENTH MEDITATION.

THE VOCATION OF ST. PETER.

Simon Peter, having seen the miraculous draught of fish he had just taken, fell down at the feet of Jesus, saying: 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. . . . Then Jesus said to him, Fear not, from henceforth thou shalt catch men.'—LUKE v. 8-10.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Figure to yourself anew the lake of Genesareth and the bark of Peter.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant me grace, O my God, to understand how greatly a contrite and humble heart is calculated to serve Thy designs and promote Thy glory.

1*st Point.*—The most insignificant of His creatures are those our Lord chooses by preference for the accomplishment of His designs.

'Henceforth thou shalt catch men' (Luke v. 10). Jesus by these words raises St. Peter to the dignity of the Apostleship; henceforth He destines him for the head of His Church, though a poor ignorant fisherman, without talents or reputation. It would seem, according to our manner of judging, that it would better have become the wisdom of Jesus to have chosen for this great work some of those illustrious men whose knowledge and capabilities rendered them renowned in the world; but the divine appointments of God are different from ours. Our Lord, who has need of no one, signalizes His wonders mainly through the weak and the ignorant: 'He raiseth up the needy from the earth, and lifteth up the poor out of the dunghill, that He may place him with the princes of His people' (Ps. cxii. 7). How consoling is this truth! It is from the feeble and lowly that our Lord derives His glory. I can then procure Him this glory, and the more perfectly because, being in myself only misery and nothingness, I cannot attribute to myself any share of the good our Lord

may please to work by my means. O infinite wisdom! Who dost make use of that which is not, to confound that which is. O God, infinitely jealous of Thy glory, Who hast said, 'I will not give My glory to another' (Isa. xlviii. 11), I repeat from my heart the words of the royal Prophet when in ecstasies of admiration at the sight of Thy works, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory' (Ps. cxiii. 9). Yes, 'O Father, glorify Thy Name' (John xii. 28). I place all my happiness in being a docile instrument in Thy hands, and in abandoning myself lovingly to Thy divine Will, repeating incessantly these words of the great Apostle, 'I will glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me' (2 Cor. 9).

2nd Point.—To be fit instruments for the designs of God, we must be well grounded in humility and perfect abandonment into His hands.

Our Lord's gifts are gratuitous, and He chooses whom He pleases for the accomplishment of His designs; nevertheless, He more willingly employs those who with humility, confidence, and docility place themselves at His disposal. Such were the dispositions of St. Peter when Jesus raised him to the dignity of the Apostleship. It was his obedience and submission which made him say: 'Master we have laboured all the night and have taken nothing; but at Thy word I will let down the net' (Luke v. 5). Humility had made him exclaim, at the sight of the miracle granted to his faith: 'Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man' (Luke v. 8). Oh! how pleasing were these virtues to the Sacred Heart of his divine Master, and by how many chosen favours were they not followed! O my Saviour, Thou dost not call me as Thou didst Peter, to spread Thy Gospel and to govern Thy Church; but there are other ministries of zeal destined for me, if, like him, I am prepared for Thy designs; if I be humble and docile to Thy Will, I can work in numberless ways for the interests of Thy glory; I can make Thee known and loved and

served. Never, therefore, permit me to neglect in future the practice of these virtues so necessary for me, and which must be used for Thy glory.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Adore Him as the God of power and wisdom, Who makes use at His pleasure of the least of His creatures, and yields to none the glory of His works. Offer Him all the glory which St. Peter, the other Apostles, and all the Saints in general, who have placed no obstacles to His designs, have procured Him. Let us humble ourselves at the sight of our dispositions, so imperfect habitually, and different to theirs, and let us offer ourselves with generosity of heart to our Lord, that He may accomplish in us, in all things, His most holy Will.

Resolutions.—To labour to acquire a great contempt of ourselves and a loving confidence in God, by making frequent interior acts of humility.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'I will glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me' (Cor. ii. 9).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

TWELFTH MEDITATION.

ZEAL OF JESUS AGAINST THE PROFANERS OF THE TEMPLE.

'Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and He found in the Temple them that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money, sitting. And when He had made, as it were, a scourge of little cords, He drove them all out of the Temple. And His disciples remembered that it was written: The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up.'—JOHN ii. 13, *et seq.*

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the Temple; it is a grand, majestic edifice; crowds are thronging to it from all parts; at its entrance are the sellers Jesus drives away with authority.

2nd Prelude.—Grant me, O Lord Jesus, the grace to imitate that most pure and ardent zeal which animated Thee for Thy Father's glory.

1st Point.—Jesus is consumed with zeal for the glory of His Heavenly Father.

'Make not the house of My Father a house of traffic' (John ii. 16). The Son of God made man for the glory of the divine Majesty must of necessity be filled with a holy zeal for the interests of that glory. Jesus Christ, as God, has a holy jealousy for the honour due to His Father, Whose rights He knows and shares. As man, He does not limit Himself to being the constant Adorer of that supreme Majesty for Whom He is animated with the most perfect sentiments of esteem, submission, respect, and dependence. He likewise uses all the authority and power He possesses to induce all mankind to reverence, adore, and glorify the sovereign Lord, to Whom alone is due all homage. Hence, beholding Him filled with a holy indignation, so different to His usual gentleness and habitual patience, let us penetrate to the centre of His Sacred Heart and seek the cause. We shall find that this divine Heart, meek and patient to excess when there is question of supporting personal affronts, will not suffer any injury towards His Heavenly Father; we shall see that the sacred fire, with which His Heart is filled, causes to flow in all His veins that generous energy and great courage which nothing can intimidate, and which manifests itself by a holy severity. Is my heart like that of my divine Saviour, alive always first and foremost to the divine interests? Do I feel an injury done to our Lord more acutely than one offered to myself? If I do not, where is the conformity I ought to have with Jesus, my Master and Model?

2nd Point.—The zeal of Jesus is prudent, mild, and full of charity. And to them that sold doves He said: 'Take these things hence' (John ii. 16). Let us admire the gentleness and moderation of our divine Master. His

zeal is great; yet He tempers it in the smallest circumstances. If He had acted towards the sellers of doves, says a pious author, in the same manner as towards the others, the doves would have flown away, and would have been lost to those who owned them. Jesus wished to alarm all, but He would not cause an injury to any one; and in so energetic an action, He teaches us still that our zeal ought always to be regulated by prudence and moderated by charity. Is my conduct, on this point, like that of my adorable Model? Is my zeal always free from anger, bitterness, and imprudence? O my Jesus, vouchsafe to penetrate me with Thy Spirit; grant that I may learn from Thee the practice of that charity, which, while it endeavours vigorously to prevent the evil which it hates, makes allowance for the guilty, because it loves them; calling to mind unceasingly that maxim so dear to Thy Sacred Heart: 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice' (Matt. ix. 13).

Colloquy with our Lord.—Adore Him as the divine model of all virtues, replenished with zeal for the glory of His Father. Humble yourself at His feet for the little resemblance which exists between His Sacred Heart and yours. Let us draw near to this adorable Heart, the source of every heavenly gift, and implore it to communicate to us the pure and ardent zeal with which it is consumed.

Resolutions.—To make use of our authority to prevent evil, yet observing all the rules of charity and prudence.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'The zeal of Thy house hath eaten me up' (Ps. lxviii. 10).

Prayer.—Pater Noster, etc.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

THIRTEENTH MEDITATION.

OF THE RESPECT DUE TO CHURCHES.

'Jesus went up to Jerusalem . . . And having found them that sold oxen and sheep and doves . . . He made, as it were, a scourge of little cords and drove them all out of the Temple.'—JOHN ii. 13, 14, 15.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent anew to yourself the porch of the Temple of Jerusalem.

2*nd Prelude.*—Inspire me, O my divine Master, with the sentiments of respect, adoration, and love which should always accompany me to Thy holy churches.

1*st Point.*—We ought to present ourselves with respect, fear, and love in the temple of the Lord.

God has ever shown Himself jealous of the honour due to His holy House. The history of the Old Testament proves this by the punishment of Heliodorus, of Rabsaces, and of so many others. To-day we behold our Lord in holy indignation against the profaners of the Temple of Jerusalem. Yet, what was this celebrated Temple compared to our churches, where the thrice blessed God deigns to reside night and day? With what respect should we not be penetrated in His holy presence, if our faith were more lively? The God of our sacred tabernacles is the divine Word, equal to His Father, Who exists from all ages. God of God, Light of Light, by Whom all things were made, and without Whom nothing has been made. He is the King of glory, the Sovereign Judge of the living and the dead. If in order to render our access to the throne of His grace more easy, He covers the rays of His glory and the brightness of His majesty with the veil of His love, does He merit our adorations any the less? Does it not seem, on the contrary, that His goodness, in soliciting our love, ought to increase our homage? Ah! it is our heart that Jesus solicits above all! God, the incarnate Wisdom, deigns to take delight in us. 'My

delight,' He says, 'is to be with the children of men (Prov. v. 31). He tenderly invites us to come and seek at His feet for consolation and rest. 'Come to Me, all you who labour and are burthened, and I will refresh you' (Matt. xi. 28). He offers us His treasures. 'All you that thirst come to the waters: and you that have no money, make haste, buy, and eat: come ye, buy wine and milk without money, and without any price' (Isa. lv. 1). How can we refrain from paying so good a God the just tribute of love which He asks of us? How can we refrain from repeating, with a heart deeply moved, the words of the Prophet King?—'How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! Better is one day in Thy courts above thousands' (Ps. xxiii. 2-11).

2nd Point.—We ought to make reparation for the outrages offered to our Lord in His temples.

Jesus dwells out of love for us in His holy temples, and is shamefully outraged therein; the greater number of Christians only present themselves before Him with coldness and insensibility; some never at all. Others, again, whose impiety makes one shudder, only go before Him to outrage Him by their irreverences, profanations, and sacrileges. If we love Him, if we be animated with zeal for His glory, is not this a subject of grief for us? The angels, who are the witnesses of so much ingratitude, weep bitterly between the porch and the altar; they invite us to join them, saying to us: 'Come, let us adore the Lord, let us weep before the God Who made us, for we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture' (Ps. xciv. 6, 7). It is, in effect, for privileged souls to indemnify our Lord for the outrages to which He has exposed Himself for love of them. Am I truly faithful in complying with this duty of gratitude?

Colloquy with our Lord hidden in the holy tabernacle. Adore and bless Him in that state of obscurity in which He deigns to bury Himself for the love of His creatures. Deplore, in the bitterness of a contrite and humble heart,

all the irreverences you may have been guilty of in His presence. Make Him reparation also for the indignities committed against Him by those unhappy creatures who know Him not. We ought, as victims, to offer to our insulted Jesus, in a spirit of adoration, atonement, and sacrifice, all that we are, and all that we are able to do.

Resolutions.—To renew our sentiments of respect and love every time we appear before God's altar.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts' (Ps. lxxxiii. 2).

Prayer.—Pater Noster, etc.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FOURTEENTH MEDITATION.

DISCOURSE OF JESUS WITH NICODEMUS.

'There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, who came to Jesus by night.'—JOHN iii. 1, 2.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself a solitary place in the middle of a calm night; it is there that Jesus speaks to Nicodemus, and wishes us also to hear His voice within our heart.

2*nd Prelude.* — O Jesus, say to my soul, 'I am Thy God,' and make me appreciate, as greatly as I ought, the new birth given to me by baptism.

1*st Point.*—Jesus Christ is truly God; we ought consequently to believe in His doctrine, and to practise it.

Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, and said to Him: 'Rabbi, we know that Thou art come, a Teacher from God, for no man can do these signs which Thou dost, unless God be with him' (John iii. 2). These words are dictated by an upright and unprejudiced mind; it is not possible, in effect, if we examine honestly the proofs which

Jesus has given of the divinity of His person, and of His religion, not to recognise in Him the promised Messias, the Son of God, the legitimate Founder of the law of grace and love. This conviction has been engraven from my infancy in the very depth of my heart; but have the practical results in my conduct, proceeding therefrom, been always in keeping with my faith? Nicodemus, in acknowing the divinity of Jesus Christ, places Himself among His disciples, and comes to learn of Him the way of salvation. Am I like him, eager to be thoroughly instructed in the doctrine of Jesus, and in that divine law which He has brought from Heaven, the code of which is in His Sacred Heart?

This holy law is unspotted, converting souls, and giving wisdom to little ones. 'More to be desired than gold, and sweeter than honey, and the honeycomb' (Ps. xviii. 8-11). O my Jesus, engrave this divine law in my soul; make me understand it perfectly, and grant that I may observe it through love.

2nd Point.—Baptism, in giving us a divine life in Jesus Christ, enforces on us belief in His doctrine and the keeping of His commandments.

And Jesus answered him: 'Amen, amen, I say to thee, Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God' (John iii. 5). The necessity of baptism is the first point of belief which Jesus offers to the faith of His new disciple; and, in effect, it is this truth which must serve as the foundation of all the others. It is on this new life of the soul, the fruit of the merits of Jesus, that the whole of Christianity rests. This, I believe, O Jesus, but is my faith practical? The grace of baptism has opened to me the gate of Heaven; but in receiving it I have contracted the engagement of labouring unceasingly to destroy in myself the inclinations of the old man, and to establish those of the new man in their place. This is pointed out to me by the words Thou didst immediately add: 'That which is born

of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit' (John iii. 6). The old man is born of the flesh, the new man is born of the Spirit. If we allow the former to prevail over the latter, the latter will infallibly perish, as the tree perishes whose useless branches they have neglected to cut off. O my God, do not permit that such a misfortune should ever befall me; grant through Thy grace that, dying unceasingly to myself, I may live for Thee alone, Who art my only joy and happiness.

Colloquy with our adorable Master.—Thanking Him for the grace of bestowing a new life on our souls in baptism, even before we were capable of desiring it. Renewing our baptismal vows. Imploring all the graces we need to help us to renounce the inclinations of the flesh, and live to those of the Spirit, that so we may be the true disciples of this good Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our God, our Master, and our Lawgiver.

Resolutions.—To combat the inclinations of corrupt nature, and chiefly those which cause us to commit faults most frequently.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Whosoever is born of God committeth no sin, for His Word abideth in him' (1 John iii. 9).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FIFTEENTH MEDITATION.

CONDUCT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

'Jesus said to Nicodemus: The Spirit breatheth where He will, and thou hearest His voice, but thou knowest not whence He cometh, and whither He goeth . . . As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting.'—JOHN iii. 8 . . . 14, 15.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 31.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant, O my Jesus, that, docile to Thy Holy Spirit, I may deserve to be enriched with the fruits of Thy redemption, and thus arrive at a happy eternity.

1*st Point.*—It is the Holy Spirit Who causes us to make progress in spiritual life.

Our adorable Master continues to instruct Nicodemus; after having revealed to him the mystery of the new life which the faithful receive in Him. Let us listen to His divine lessons; they are given for us: 'The Spirit,' said Jesus Christ, 'breatheth where He will, and thou hearest His voice; but thou knowest not whence He cometh, and whither He goeth' (John iii. 8). This voice of the Spirit is the divine language of the whisperings of grace and holy inspirations. It cannot be understood by unguarded souls; He seeks a recollected and attentive heart. 'Thou knowest not whence He cometh.' He very frequently visits the soul at the close of a well-made meditation, of a fervent communion or of an instruction listened to with attention; but at other times His visit is so sudden that it cannot be foreseen: an example touches us, a word is said, it would seem by chance, which becomes for us as a shining light or an inflamed dart: a thought arises spontaneously in our mind. 'We know not whither He

goeth.' A good inspiration, faithfully followed up, often opens the way to a chain of graces, which render our progress in spiritual life rapid, secure, and even easy. Oh! how vigilant I ought to be; how faithful, and how recollected, since the moments of our Lord's graces are so precious, and at the same time so short!

2nd Point.—It is the death of Jesus which has merited the Holy Spirit for us.

Let us continue to listen to the words of life which flow from the lips of Jesus. 'As Moses, said He, 'lifted up the serpent in the desert, so shall the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting' (John iii. 14, 15). After having spoken of the mysteries of grace, it was fitting to say something of the mystery of the Cross, the only source of all heavenly gifts. What sublime truths are contained in these words! It is the second Moses, the Master of the New Law, who is to raise before our eyes in the desert of this life, not a brazen serpent, but the tree of the Cross; the fruits of this tree of life will cure all the evils brought into the world by the sin of our first father. But why does Jesus imply He *must* be raised on the Cross? Without doubt, such a remedy was necessary to save mankind; but, is the death of a God of such absolute necessity for the interests of one guilty creature? Ah! Jesus Himself is about to solve the difficulty by saying: 'So must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish. . . For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son.' And, as if He feared not to be sufficiently understood, He adds: 'For God sent not His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved by Him' (John iii. 14-17). What infinite charity! I am incapable, O my God, of worthily acknowledging so great a benefit; but receive at least my lively acts of thanksgiving, and the inviolable resolution which I now make of henceforth entering into all the designs of Thy

love, by appropriating Thy divine merits and corresponding faithfully with Thy grace.

Colloquy with our divine Jesus.—Let us offer Him the homage of all the sentiments of love, gratitude, and confidence which His goodness shall excite within us. Let us beg of Him to teach us to gaze on the emblem of salvation, raised up on the holy mountain to cure us of the wounds of the infernal serpent. Let us ask Him, also, for the grace to follow in all things the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, the precious fruits of the great mystery of the Cross.

Resolutions.—To be attentive and faithful to interior inspirations, through a motive of love and gratitude.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'The Spirit breatheth where He will, and thou hearest His voice; but thou knowest not whence He cometh, and whither He goeth' (John iii. 8); or, 'God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son' (John iii. 16).

Prayer.—Pater Noster, etc.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SIXTEENTH MEDITATION.

UPRIGHTNESS OF MIND AND PURITY OF HEART.

'Jesus said to Nicodemus: Every one that doth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reproved. But he that doth truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they are done in God.' —John iii. 20. 21.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 31.

2*nd Prelude.*—O God, who art Truth itself, teach me all truth, place me in the way of truth; may all my works be done according to Thy truth, so that I may walk always in Thy presence with loving confidence.

1*st Point.* — He who does evil hates and fears the light.

Nicodemus is instructed in the means by which grace is conferred, in its effect in the soul, in the mysteries of love which it has procured for us; it remains still for him to be taught that uprightness of conscience is necessary for the service of God. Jesus does this in these words, 'Every one that doth evil hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, that his works may not be reproved' (John iii. 20). This lesson, the application of which is requisite in all times and places, was above all necessary for Nicodemus, who, engaged by his condition of life with the sect of the Pharisees, would so soon have to defend himself against its contagious hatred of Jesus, the true Light, whose brightness was so annoying to it. Nicodemus knew how to profit by the salutary lesson. I ought to imitate His example, destined as I am to live in the midst of a world which has declared an implacable hatred against Jesus and His Church, only because the sincerity of the Gospel condemns its disorders. I am sensible of its injustice; never permit me, O my God, to partake of it. This misfortune would be mine if I ceased to be faithful to the voice of my conscience, since corruption of heart infallibly ruins the mind. Grant then, through Thy grace, that I may always follow the salutary advice given me by Thy holy Apostle in these words: 'We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore, let us not sleep, as others do; but let us watch and be sober' (1 Thess. v. 5, 6).

2*nd Point.*—He who acts uprightly loves the light and draws near to it. Our adorable Master adds: He who doth according to justice 'cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest' (John iii. 21). The truth which Jesus Christ announces in these words has been completely confirmed by His works; He feared so little the most penetrating watchfulness, that He dared to defy His enemies to find anything blameworthy in Him.

'Which of you,' He said to them, 'shall convince Me of sin?' (John viii. 46). If in the course of His Passion He was asked to give an account of His doctrine, He answered, 'Interrogate those who have listened to Me, for I have taught nothing in secret.' This perfect integrity, which shrinks from no investigation, has descended from the person of Jesus Christ to His Church. She may say, in the words of her divine Founder: 'The works that I do in the name of My Father give testimony of Me . . . if then you will not believe Me, believe My works' (John x. 25, 38). The true disciples of Jesus follow also in this noble path. The esteem which even the wicked are forced to accord them is not the only recompense they receive. 'He who doth truth draweth near to the light' (John iii. 21). This light surrounds and penetrates them, in proportion to their worthiness of its divine effulgence, for 'The path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forwards and increaseth, even to perfect day' (Prov. iv. 18).

Have I understood the value of this precious advantage? Are my ways perfectly upright before God? Do I deserve to be enlightened with this divine light?

Colloquy with our divine Jesus.—Let us adore Him as the Master of truth, the Just One by excellence. Let us ask of Him the conversion of all the unhappy ones who hate Him. Let us implore of Him to place that truth within us which will make us walk with fervour and confidence in the paths of virtue, both before God and man.

Resolutions.—To follow the light of our conscience faithfully. To despise human respect.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right spirit within my bowels' (Ps. l. 12).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SEVENTEENTH MEDITATION.

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF TRUE ZEAL.

'Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He abode with them and baptized . . . John also was baptizing in Ennon . . . And they came to John and said to him: Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to Whom thou gavest testimony, behold He baptizeth, and all men come to Him. John answered and said . . . He must increase, but I must decrease.'—JOHN iii. 22, *et seq.*

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the outskirts of Judea, where our divine Lord baptized through His disciples.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant me grace, O Jesus, to despise myself, and to seek Thy glory alone in all things, after the example of St. John the Baptist, Thy divine Precursor.

1*st Point.*—The virtues which accompany true zeal.

'Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond the Jordan, to Whom thou gavest testimony, baptizeth, and all men come to Him' (John iii. 26). The disciples of John the Baptist, jealous of their master's glory, could not behold, without pain, Jesus administering baptism, and gaining the respect and confidence of the people. Such sentiments are only too common with persons whose virtue is not sufficiently purified. They relish very little the good they have not done themselves; it seems even to irritate them, and they sometimes go so far as to find specious pretexts for destroying it. Such injustice springs from secret pride, which glides into intentions, apparently the purest, and persuades people that they are seeking nothing but the glory of God, when, in fact, it is their own glory they are seeking. True zeal is exempt from all these defects; it is pure, simple, disinterested, and profoundly humble. In John the Baptist's answer we find its perfect model. 'A man,' he said, 'cannot receive anything unless it be

given him from heaven' (John iii. 27). It is as if he said: God is the Master of His gifts; He makes use of whom He pleases; I am far from desiring those more exalted and important functions, which He has thought fit to bestow on others more worthy of them than I am. 'He that hath the bride, is the Bridegroom' (John iii. 29). It is just that the Church should be founded under the auspices of its legitimate Founder; but 'the friend of the Bridegroom, who standeth and heareth Him, rejoiceth with joy because of the Bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease' (John iii. 29, 30). Far from envying His success, I acknowledge Him for my Master, and rejoice exceedingly in it; the Lord is glorified, which is my only ambition. He must increase in glory and success, and I must diminish, returning willingly to my first obscurity, since the period of my mission is over, and He will Himself finish what He has given me the grace to begin in accordance with His holy Will.—Is it with dispositions so pure and so humble that I apply myself to the good works which our Lord deigns to afford me the opportunity of practising?

2nd Point.—The means of rendering zeal efficacious.

'He must increase, and I must decrease' (John iii. 30).

We cannot succeed in works undertaken for the glory of God and the salvation of souls if we be full of our own conceits and void of the Spirit of God. The following are some of the marks by which we may judge ourselves. We are full of self when we seek our own glory in the good works we do; or, when we cannot understand or relish any but the praiseworthy projects we ourselves have conceived; or, again, when we rely on our own industry, or success, instead of depending on the help of God. With such dispositions it is seldom we can do any real good, because we act alone, and without the aid of our Lord. 'He that is of the earth, of the earth he speaketh' (John iii. 31); that is to say, from the weakness of the creature. But if, on the contrary, we know

how to distrust self, and forget self, with sufficient generosity to sacrifice self, to embrace labour, to bear with patience contradictions and difficulties, to support the annoyances and humiliations which may result from our zealous undertakings; if we give back faithfully to God all the glory of any success, the reign of the Lord increases, while that of the creature diminishes. And as our good God never allows Himself to be outdone in generosity, He will Himself inspire us as to what we are to do, and will assist us with His grace, so that the remaining words of the holy Precursor may be verified in us: 'He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God; for God doth not give the Spirit by measure' (John iii. 34). Then the fruits which are produced in souls are solid and abundant, because they are the Lord's own work, Who acts freely in us. Am I touched with such precious advantages? Do I desire them sufficiently to make, in order to procure them, all the efforts and sacrifices our divine Lord expects from me?

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the only Author of all good, and offer Him all the glory which the fidelity of His true servants can procure Him. Let us humble ourselves for our self-love, and for the many defects which may have, up to the present, accompanied our good works. Let us beg of our divine Master to fill us with His spirit, and deprive us of our own.

Resolutions.—To be in fear of ourselves, and resolve to act henceforth from the purest motives alone.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Jesus must increase, but I must decrease' (John iii. 30).

Prayer.—Pater Noster, etc.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

EIGHTEENTH MEDITATION.

JESUS WITH THE SAMARITAN WOMAN.

'Jesus left Judea and went again into Galilee, and He was of necessity to pass through Samaria. He cometh therefore to a city of Samaria, called Sichar . . . Now Jacob's well was there. . . . Jesus being wearied with His journey sat thus on the well. . . . There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith to her: Give Me to drink.'—JOHN iv. 3-7.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.* — Represent to yourself, near Samaria, Jacob's well, beside which Jesus is sitting.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant, O my Jesus, that in meditating on the secrets of Thy divine conduct, my soul may be penetrated with lively gratitude towards Thee, and filled with an ardent zeal to gain souls for Thee.

1*st Point.*—With what wisdom Jesus labours for our salvation!

It was not by chance that the Samaritan woman came to Jacob's well at the precise moment when Jesus, wearied with His long journey, was resting there: the divine Wisdom, which presides over all events, had so ordered things, in order to convert this sinner, and procure for Samaria the knowledge of our Lord. It is thus that divine Providence contrives meetings, made, it would seem, by chance, but their results are of most momentous consequence for the salvation of souls. Let us here call to mind all the contrivances of grace of which our dear Lord has so often made use to gain us; all the different circumstances united, where nothing appeared but what was natural, which, nevertheless, were brought about by His love. This we could easily see afterwards, by the happy results which followed. Let us adore the profound wisdom and infinite goodness of our Lord; but let us not stop at sterile sentiments of gratitude: God demands of us, in proof of our gratitude, that we serve Him in the person

of our neighbour, as others have served us who have been His instruments in doing good to us. For this end, let us imitate the example of our adorable Model; He never lets an opportunity escape Him of trying to save sinners; He passes through Samaria to accomplish the designs known to His Father. He stops at the well to wait for the strayed sheep; and wearied as He is, He thinks only of gaining her, and procuring her salvation. O my adorable Jesus! grant me grace to be attentive to seize every opportunity of serving Thy heavenly Father with zeal and fidelity.

2nd Point.—With what ardour Jesus desires our salvation!

Jesus, wishing to enter into conversation with the Samaritan woman, speaks first; it is thus His goodness deigns to entice sinners; it is thus I have been allured so many times, when I have been solicited by grace to abandon sin and tepidity, before I had thought of returning to my duty. 'Give me to drink' (John iv. 7), He says. Christ, Who is the sovereign Master of heaven and earth, deigns to humble Himself to ask, and what is still more admirable, He is not offended by the refusal He meets, but repeats His request with an amiability worthy of His divine patience: 'Give Me to drink.' Jesus thirsts, but it is for the salvation, and sanctification, and happiness of souls that He thirsts. The request, 'Give Me to drink,' He addresses to me every time He asks of me interiorly some act of virtue or some sacrifice. Shall I not then quench the thirst of the Sacred Heart of my Jesus, which is caused by the intensity of His love for me?

Colloquy with our divine Jesus.—Let us adore Him as the supreme Wisdom Who contrives and brings about every event, and as the infinite Goodness Who has in view the salvation of His creatures in all He does. Let us thank Him for the loving interest of which we have been the object. Let us ask Him to make us comprehend the

profound signification of these words: 'Give Me to drink.' Let us promise not to neglect anything that may tend to satisfy the ardent desire that consumes Jesus for our sanctification, and for that of our neighbour.

Resolutions.—To seize with eagerness the opportunities of practising the virtues which are wanting to us, with a view to please Jesus Christ. With the same motive, to procure according to our power the salvation of others.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Jesus, zealous lover of souls, have mercy on us!'

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

NINETEENTH MEDITATION.

THE GIFT OF GOD: LIVING WATER.

'Then the Samaritan woman saith to Jesus: How dost Thou, being a Jew, ask of me to drink, who am a Samaritan woman? . . . Jesus answered and said to her: If thou didst know the gift of God, and who is He that saith to thee: Give Me to drink, thou perhaps wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.'—JOHN iv. 9, 10.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—The same as in the preceding meditation, page 42.

2*nd Prelude.*—Open to me, divine Jesus, the sacred fountains of Thy grace; teach me the value thereof, and inspire me to come and draw thenceforth life and salvation.

1*st Point.*—The blessings of grace are precious.

God dispenses the goods of this life with a sort of prodigality—health, honours, prosperity, riches. He shares them between the just and sinners; the latter oftentimes have the greater share; the reason is because such goods are too common, and the divine Wisdom esteems them too

little to allow them to be dearly bought; but it is not so with supernatural riches; with those interior lights, inspirations of grace, and virtues which render man like unto God. God has willed that the precious Blood of His Son should be the price thereof, and that these gifts should only be bestowed on those who are united to Him as members to their Head. If, according to the custom adopted in the commerce of this world, the value of things is estimated according to the price they have cost, of what inestimable value are not these graces! This special gift of God could not be bestowed on us except through the death of a Saviour, Who is God! Ah! 'If thou didst know the gift of God,' are words which were not uttered by Jesus for the Samaritan woman alone; He addresses them to each one of us, that He may excite in all hearts the desire of knowing so precious a treasure. Let us beg of Him to discover to us the infinite value of it; to make us understand, at the same time, that it is 'a gift of God' we have not merited, but that He has first offered it to us by a pure movement of His gratuitous bounty. O my God! vouchsafe to discover unto me these great truths: 'Give me, O Lord, understanding, and I shall live' (Ps. cxviii. 144).

2nd Point.—The treasures of grace are desirable.

'If thou didst know Who is He that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water' (John iv. 10). Why does our divine Master call the precious gift of His grace living water? It is to make us understand the effects this gift produces in souls. As water cleanses and purifies that which is stained, so the grace of Jesus, destroying sin, washes away all its stains. Again, as water condensed by dew and rain refreshes and moistens plants and renders the earth fertile, so does the grace of Jesus re-animate the fervour of holy desires and render a good will efficacious. In fine, as water is necessary for all sorts of purposes, and among others is used to prepare food,

so does the grace of Jesus maintain in us the life of our souls and lend its aid in all our actions, without which we could do nothing meritorious for heaven. Jesus calls the mysterious water of His grace 'living water,' not only because it flows abundantly from His Sacred Heart, as from a pure and limpid stream, but also, because it gives and maintains the life of the soul, being at once its principle and its nourishment. What a happiness for the Samaritan woman to have found this divine source, and Him Who alone could open it to her! If she had known it, far from letting Jesus anticipate her, she would have been the first to have asked for this precious water. Equally happy, and better instructed than she was, am I faithful in 'drawing water with joy from the Saviour's fountains' (Isa. xii. 3)?

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the divine source of living water which springs forth to life eternal. Let us testify our gratitude for the gift, or rather for the numberless gifts which He has brought us from heaven. The gift of His divinity by His Incarnation; of His merits, His grace, and His life by the Redemption; of Himself entirely in the holy Eucharist; of His Sacred Heart and all the treasures which it contains. Let us beg of Him to make us appreciate as greatly as we should these infinite benefits, and to teach us to draw from the sacred sources His goodness has opened for us.

Resolutions.—To reflect often during the day on the gifts our Lord has bestowed on us, in order to esteem them as they deserve, and to excite ourselves to gratitude.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'If thou didst know the gift of God' (John iv. 10).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

TWENTIETH MEDITATION.

GOD OUR ONLY HAPPINESS, AND THE ONLY OBJECT OF PERFECT WORSHIP.

'Whosoever shall drink of this water shall thirst again, but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst for ever.'—JOHN iv. 13.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Still represent to yourself, outside Samaria, Jacob's well, beside which Jesus is sitting, discoursing with the Samaritan woman.

2*nd Prelude.*—O Jesus, vouchsafe to cure me of thirsting for earthly things, and teach me to adore Thy Father in spirit and in truth, that I may deserve to drink copiously from the waters which spring up to life eternal.

1*st Point.*—God alone can satisfy our heart.

'Whosoever shall drink of this water shall thirst again' (John iv. 13). The deceitful water, of which Jesus speaks here, cannot satisfy any one; namely, the possession of the goods of this world, the vain satisfactions of pride, and of all other bad passions. In vain does a crowd of senseless beings, pressed by the desire of happiness, which God has implanted in the heart of all men, seek to satisfy therewith the burning thirst of their cravings. They find only troubled waters, which increase their thirst, instead of satisfying it. It is not thus with those who seek their happiness in God. 'He,' says Jesus, 'that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst for ever' (John iv. 13). Our Lord, Who made our hearts for Himself, has formed them so that they cannot find satisfaction or happiness out of Him alone. Since then His goodness has deigned to assign so noble an end to such poor unworthy creatures; since He wishes to be, so to speak, the element of our souls, not permitting that they should find life or rest but in Him, is it not

to our infinite advantage to seek our happiness in Him alone? 'The water that I will give,' says Jesus Christ, 'shall become in him a fountain of life, springing up into life everlasting' (John iv. 14). Union with God is not only the consolation and repose of our souls during this life, commenced in this land of exile; it is perpetuated and consummated in a happy eternity. What powerful motives to engage us to despise all that is not good, that we may be united to Him alone! Grant me grace, O my God, to be penetrated therewith, and above all render my conduct conformable to the sentiments with which Thy grace shall inspire me.

2nd Point.—Adoration in spirit and in truth can alone please God.

'The hour cometh, and now is, when the true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and in truth. God is a Spirit, and they that adore Him must adore Him in spirit and in truth' (John iv. 23, 24). These words of our divine Master point out to us the means we are to use, in order to be in a state to receive the living water which extinguishes every earthly desire; and, that is, to be adorers in spirit and in truth. It is not sufficient, then, to honour our Lord by some exterior acts of religion; our homage must spring from a sincere and upright heart; exterior piety may impose on men, but it cannot deceive God, Whose looks penetrate even to our most secret thoughts. He has said, in speaking of the Children of Israel: 'This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me' (Mark vii. 6). He rejects all prayers that are not animated by an interior sentiment of religion and piety; all homage offered by a heart which only gives itself to Him by halves. I ought then to adore Him with sincerity and fervour, if I wish to be agreeable to Him, and to receive the graces which flow copiously from His divine Heart.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the Source of living waters, which alone can satisfy our souls. Let

us beg of Him to teach us to adore His Father in spirit and in truth, that so we may merit to draw grace from His holy fountains. Let us ask Him for these graces. Let us promise to be ever faithful to Him.

Resolutions.—To apply ourselves to-day to acquit ourselves well of our exercises of piety, animating ourselves with a sincere desire of glorifying God and pleasing Him.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'God is a Spirit, and they that adore Him must adore Him in spirit and in truth' (John iv. 24). Or else: 'He that shall drink of the water that I will give Him, shall not thirst for ever' (John iv. 13).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

TWENTY-FIRST CONTEMPLATION.

JESUS WITH THE SAMARITAN WOMAN.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Jesus came to a city of Samaria, called Sichar. Now Jacob's well was there, and Jesus sat on it. Then there came a woman of Samaria to draw water, and this woman, after a long conversation with Jesus, left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and said to those there: 'Come and see a Man Who has told me all things whatsoever I have done. Is not He the Christ?' (John iv. 5, *seq.*).

2*nd Prelude.*—Represent to yourself outside the walls of Samaria Jacob's well, where Jesus is discoursing with the Samaritan woman.

3*rd Prelude.*—Vouchsafe to speak to me, O my Jesus, those words of life which enlighten the mind and convert the heart! This I beg of Thee in the name of that ardent zeal which Thou hast for my salvation.

1*st Point.*—Consider the persons. Jesus, full of gentle kindness and modest dignity. He is sitting. He speaks. The Samaritan woman is standing. Her dress and manners betoken the middle class. She is listening to Jesus.

2*nd Point.*—Listen to the words. Jesus speaks the first: 'Give Me to drink,' He says (John iv. 7). It is for the salvation of this woman that He thirsts. She answers Him at first with a want of politeness and ironically. He insists, and excites her curiosity, the better to fix her attention. 'Ah! if thou didst know the gift of God, and Who is He that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou perhaps wouldst have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water.' The woman says to Him: 'Sir, Thou hast nothing wherein to draw, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou living water?' She does not yet comprehend the words she has just heard; nevertheless, the secret unction which accompanies them penetrates her heart; she becomes more respectful, and asks for an explanation. Jesus answers: 'Whosoever shall drink of this water shall thirst again; but he that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst for ever.' The Samaritan woman has still a low and imperfect notion of the water of which He speaks; nevertheless, she desires it. 'Sir,' she continues, 'give me of this water, that I may not thirst, nor come hither to draw.' Jesus saith to her: 'Go, call thy husband.' She, impatient to have what she has asked for, replies: 'I have no husband.' Jesus takes the opportunity of showing her that nothing is hidden from His eyes. She acknowledges Him for a prophet; proposes her doubts to Him; listens to His instructions; tells Him she believes in the Messias and expects Him. Jesus, finding her thus prepared, says to her: 'I am He Who am speaking with thee.' At these words, transported out of herself, she goes her way, saying to all whom she meets: 'Come and see a Man Who has told me all things whatsoever I have done: is not He

the Christ?' (John iv. 10, *seq.*). And the Samaritans believed in Him.

3rd Point.—Consider the actions. Jesus, wearied with His long journey, is seated on the well. The Samaritan woman comes to draw water. It was there the divine Shepherd awaited His strayed sheep . . . He speaks to her, and by degrees grace penetrates her soul; she is touched, converted, and changed by it from a sinner into an apostle. Filled with the spirit which animates her, she leaves her pitcher, and goes to announce Jesus to the inhabitants of Samaria.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the Author of grace. Let us offer Him all the souls He has gained to His love through the gentle power of His holy word. Let us thank Him for having deigned to speak to our hearts in order to move us and enlighten us. Let us ask of Him graces of conversion, similar to those He granted to the Samaritan woman, and above all an ardent zeal to make Him known and loved by all.

Resolutions.—To recollect ourselves frequently during the day, that we may hearken to the interior voice of Jesus. To try to excite others by our example, and, if we can, also by our words, to advance in His knowledge and love.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'If thou didst know the gift of God' (John iv. 10).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

TWENTY-SECOND MEDITATION.

THE WILL OF GOD THE FOOD OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

'In the meantime the disciples prayed Him, saying, Rabbi, eat. But He said to them: I have meat to eat which you know not . . . My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work.'—JOHN iv. 31, *seq.*

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Still figure to yourself Jacob's well, outside the walls of Samaria.

2*nd Prelude.*—Adorable Heart of Jesus, discover to me the secret of that loving obedience which constituted Thy food, and should also be mine, since in all things I ought to follow Thy example.

1*st Point.*—The Heart of Jesus finds its nourishment in doing His Father's Will. 'My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work' (John iv. 34). Jesus descended from Heaven to accomplish the Will of His Father, and He consecrated Himself with so much ardour and affection to this noble work that He was occupied with it alone. This He expresses in the words we have already meditated: 'I must be about My Father's business' (Luke ii. 49). To-day He goes yet further. He gives us to understand that it is in doing His Father's Will that His Sacred Heart finds its repose. As a man exhausted with fatigue acquires new strength through the food which he takes, in like manner does the loving Heart of Jesus find in the accomplishment of the divine Will the courage which sustains it in the midst of the prolonged and painful labours of His mission . . . Is this disposition of the Sacred Heart of my good Master well known also to me? Do I know how to penetrate thoroughly the depths of the love which consumes Him for the Will of His Father? Above all, do I know how to attach myself after His example to that divine Will in such a manner that I may never weary in accomplishing it?

2nd Point.—This food is known to few persons. It is known, in general, that in order to be a good and faithful servant of our Lord we must do His Will; but it is very rare that in the practice of this principle its consequences are admitted to their full extent. We love the Will of God, but only while it does not impose on us any very painful sacrifice. We are pious, but in our own way, and in following our own will; which is easily discerned by the impatience we give way to when anything happens to disturb our practices of piety, or the good works which we had planned. If we knew well the mysterious food of Jesus and His Saints; if, like them, we understood how to make use of it, we should discover the divine Will in all things: everything would become for us an opportunity for merit, and we should possess within us a profound peace. Every motive unites in bringing us to the practice of so precious a virtue; God is extremely glorified by it: it may even be said that no work, otherwise good in itself, can be agreeable to Him without this motive. 'Have I need of your offerings?' said He to His people. 'Your fasts glorify Me not, because in fasting you do your own will' (Is. lviii. 3). This virtue of conformity to the Will of God is the virtue which will render us like unto Jesus Christ more promptly and more perfectly than any other. Shall I not then apply myself to it with fervour and perseverance? It is painful in the commencement, but the grace which it contains is a hidden manna, a nourishing fruit, whose sweetness we quickly taste when we have had courage enough to break the rind.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the divine Son of the Heavenly Father—a Son submissive, obedient, and loving. Let us implore of Him to communicate to our heart the sentiments of zeal and love with which His is filled for the divine Will. Let us ask Him also to give us the strength and courage necessary to surmount all the obstacles which may stand in the way of its perfect accomplishment. Let us offer and consecrate ourselves entirely to the service of our Heavenly Father.

Resolutions.—To perform all our actions to-day with the intention of accomplishing the Will of God. If we should have anything painful to do or to hear, to think of the loving obedience of Jesus, and unite ours thereto.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'My meat is to do my Father's Will' (John iv. 31).

Prayer.—Receive, O Lord, my liberty without reserve; deign to accept my memory, my understanding, and my will. I have nothing, I possess nothing, which is not the gift of Thy bounty. I give back all to Thee. I abandon all without reserve to Thy Will, that Thou mayest dispose of all as it shall please Thee. All that I ask of Thee is Thy grace and Thy love; with these I shall be rich enough, and I beg for nothing more.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

TWENTY-THIRD MEDITATION.

CURE OF THE RULER'S SON.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—'Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee. And there was a certain ruler whose son was sick at Capharnaum. . . . He went to find Jesus, and prayed Him to come down and heal his son. . . . Jesus saith to him, Go thy way; thy son liveth' (John iv. 46, *seq.*).

2*nd Prelude.*—Represent to yourself one of the public streets of Cana; then the high-road by which the father of the sick child returns to Capharnaum.

3*rd Prelude.*—Vouchsafe, O Jesus, to inspire me with a lively faith and entire confidence in Thy powerful goodness, since these dispositions give Thee honour and obtain all things from Thy Sacred Heart.

1*st Point.*—Consider the persons. Jesus, always ac-

companied with that grave modesty and amiable dignity which announce that He is more than man. The Apostles. They are simple honest men; they are attentive to the actions of their divine Master. The ruler whose son is sick: he is full of respect; the fear of a refusal, or the anxious desire of being listened to, shows itself in his countenance and in his every movement.

2nd and 3rd Points.—Listen to the words and consider the actions. Jesus is surrounded by a numberless crowd of people. An afflicted father comes forward: a severe blow has fallen on him; his dear son is at the point of death. Oh! how well is he inspired to come to Jesus; His Sacred Heart is power and goodness itself, whence blessings flow as from their source. The reply of our divine Lord is at first a reproach, tempered by gentleness, on the weakness of his faith, and still more of his confidence. 'Unless,' said He, 'you see signs and wonders, you believe not' (John iv. 48). The ruler perseveres: 'Lord, come down before that my son die. Jesus saith, Go thy way; thy son liveth;' and at the same moment the all-powerful virtue of His divinity works the cure which He announces. The ruler returns overwhelmed with joy and hope. And as he was on the road his servants met him and brought him word that his son lived. He asked of them the hour wherein he grew better, and learnt that it was at the precise hour in which Jesus had said to him: 'Thy son liveth.' His faith became strengthened, and his whole house believed in Jesus (John iv. 49-53).

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the all powerful God Who commands, as He pleases, sickness, life and death. Let us thank Him for having worked miracles to serve as foundations to our faith, and to that of all generations. Let us make an act of confidence in that infinite Goodness which manifests itself in all His works. Let us beg of Him to cure the maladies of our soul as He cured the ruler's son at Capharnaum, and let

us ask Him also to strengthen our faith as He increased the faith in that house.

Resolutions.—To beg of Jesus, by frequent aspirations, to cure the maladies of our soul. Also, to pray several times in the day for the conversion of sinners, earnestly imploring Jesus not to let them die eternally.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—Heart of Jesus, Ocean of bounty, have mercy on us.

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 2.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

TWENTY-FOURTH MEDITATION.

THE POWER AND GOODNESS OF JESUS IN CURING THE SICK AND DRIVING AWAY THE WICKED SPIRITS.

'Jesus went with His disciples to Capharnaum—and when it was evening they brought to Him all that were ill and were possessed with devils . . . And He healed many that were troubled with divers diseases; and He cast out many devils.' —MARK i. 32, 34.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the house of Simon and Andrew, which Jesus has entered; there is an immense crowd round the door.

2*nd Prelude.*—Divine Jesus, Who art not less good nor less powerful to-day than Thou wast in the days of Thy mortal life, inspire me with faith and confidence like unto that which penetrated the people at the sight of Thy miracles.

1*st Point.*—Jesus wishes to cure all our maladies.

The inhabitants of Capharnaum and its environs, informed of the presence of Jesus in their town, brought to Him their sick and possessed people, that He might cure them. Such ought to be our eagerness to come and seek from Jesus a remedy for the maladies of our soul. This

good Master unites to-day, as formerly, the power of a God with the tenderness of a Saviour, and our miseries affect Him all the more because, being spiritual ones, they may bear incomparably sadder results than corporal maladies. He wishes us to expose our maladies to Him with faith and confidence—and what can be more easy? His presence is not limited to a single place, as was the case during His mortal life; the crowd of people who surround Him cannot hinder us from approaching Him easily. He is always ready to listen to us and to hear us. What an inestimable happiness to have a Saviour so powerful, so kind, and, above all, so easy of access! How does it happen that with all these advantages my soul is still so weak and sick? Ah! I can only attribute this to the weakness of my faith, and the little desire I have to be cured. Oh, Jesus, give me dispositions like unto the sick mentioned in the Gospel, that so I may obtain with them an abundant share in Thy mercies.

2nd Point.—Jesus wishes us to labour for the cure of our neighbour.

Jesus, our divine Model, desires that we imitate in Him that universal goodness which rejects no one, but does good to all with kindness and charity. Undoubtedly, we cannot, like Him, restore health to the sick, or release the possessed; but we can compassionate miseries when it is not in our power otherwise to relieve them; above all (and this is what the Sacred Heart of our divine Master particularly expects from us), we can solicit, by fervent prayers, the cure of so many souls infected with sin, the deliverance of so many unhappy beings whom the devil holds in bondage; not visibly, but by a secret possession brought on through mortal sin and incomparably more deplorable than the other, since it leads to eternal death. Am I well instructed in the school of my divine Master? Have I drawn from His Sacred Heart a tender compassion for the miseries of others, which has made me relieve them through a sincere and cordial affection?

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as our God and Saviour. Let us thank Him for all that He has done up to the present for the cure of our soul. Let us expose to Him with humility and confidence all the maladies which still remain. Let us also recommend poor sinners to His mercy, especially those in whom we ought to take most interest. Let us ask Him to make our heart like unto His by a universal and active charity.

Resolutions.—To pray with greater fervour to-day, in order to obtain of Jesus the entire cure of our soul. To procure by our prayers, and by every means in our power, the spiritual cure of sinners.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean' (Matt. viii. 2).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

TWENTY-FIFTH MEDITATION.

JESUS SUSTAINS WORK BY PRAYER.

'And rising very early, going out, He went into a desert place and there He prayed.'—MARK i. 35.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the solitary place where Jesus retired to pray: a profound silence reigns on every side.

2*nd Prelude.*—'Lord, teach me to pray' (Luke xi. 1), penetrate me with Thy holy grace, and with the spirit of prayer, so that, supported by Thy aid, I may do all things well.

1*st Point.*—Jesus sustains work by prayer. It was only after thirty years of seclusion that Jesus undertook the labours of His public life; His immediate preparation for them was a fast of forty days with continual prayer.

When engaged in work, He still steals some moments from His important functions to go and treat with His Heavenly Father, thus teaching us that prayer ought always to accompany and sustain labour. If Jesus, notwithstanding the necessary and intimate union of His lowly soul with the Divinity, has not thought it right to neglect prayer, can we reasonably, after such an example, consider useless so powerful a means of re-animating continually the strength of our soul? Prayer is to the soul what food and sleep are to the body: they afford it rest and sustain its strength incessantly. 'My heart is withered,' said the Psalmist, 'because I forgot to eat my bread' (Ps. xl. 1-5). This bread is prayer; as soon as the practice thereof is neglected, fervour declines and is exhausted, the interior spirit evaporates, and if works can still be good in themselves without the help of prayer, it is, nevertheless, certain that they cannot be closely united to those of Jesus, nor animated by His Spirit. Again, it is very difficult to persevere for any length of time in the performance of a good work, unless we are watchful to refresh our soul frequently by raising it to God in prayer, for we are like unto clocks, whose weight is constantly running down, and whose movement ceases entirely unless it be wound up regularly. Am I faithful in following the example of my divine Master? Do I seek in prayer an interior spirit, and the strength of which I have need to render my works perfect?

2nd Point.—Jesus retires into a solitary place to pray.

'Jesus went into a desert place, and there He prayed' (Mark i. 35). Jesus retired from noise. This circumstance is again an important lesson for us; the Holy Spirit has said: 'Before prayer, prepare thy soul, and be not like a man that tempteth God' (Eccl. xviii. 23). It is tempting God to pray without preparation: now this preparation consists principally in forgetting for the moment every other care, the better to be profoundly recollected in the presence of the Lord. St. Bernard, as often as he entered

the Church to pray, was in the habit of saying to his wandering thoughts, 'Stay here till I return to find you.' It is thus we should act. During prayer our soul must be alone with God alone.

The voice of the Lord is sweet. It is only in silence and recollection that it can be heard (Cant. ii. 14). He has said Himself, speaking of the faithful soul: 'I will lead her into solitude, and then I will speak to her heart' (Ps. ii. 14). What have I done up to the present to obtain communications so much to be desired? Am I careful to retire to pray within that interior solitude which consists in rejecting every other thought than that of God alone?

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us unite our adorations to those He is about to render to His Father in a solitary place, with those which the angels are offering to Him. Let us humble ourselves that our prayers have been up to the present so full of defects, and so little like unto His. Let us ask of Him the spirit of prayer and recollection, and that interior spirit which renders prayer so easy, and work so perfect.

Resolutions.—To renew to-day our firm determination never to omit or abridge our meditation without indispensable necessity. Often to raise our heart to God during the day by ejaculatory prayers.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—We are always to pray and not to faint (Luke xviii. 1). Or else: 'I will lead her into solitude and speak to her heart' (Ps. ii. 14).

Prayer.—Pater noster, etc.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

TWENTY-SIXTH MEDITATION.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF THE ZEAL OF JESUS.

'The multitude sought Jesus in a desert place . . . and they stayed Him that He should not depart from them. To whom He said: To other cities also I must preach the kingdom of God: for therefore am I sent.'—LUKE iv. 42, 43.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent anew to yourself the desert place where Jesus retired to pray; the multitude have followed Him there.

2*nd Prelude.*—Divine Jesus, zealous for the salvation of all mankind, vouchsafe to inspire my soul with a zeal as universal and effective as Thine.

1*st Point.*—Jesus labours for the salvation of all. 'To other cities also I must preach the Kingdom of God; for therefore am I sent' (Luke iv. 43). Jesus, by these words, shows us the extent of His zeal; He was not sent for a single city, or one single nation; for, if during His life He limited His preaching to Judea, before leaving His Apostles to return to Heaven, He said to them: 'Go ye and teach all nations' (Matt. xxviii. 19). Jesus is the Saviour of all mankind; He has the Heart of a Father for all; it is to this loving disposition of His that I am indebted for the happiness of knowing the true Faith, since our ancestors belonged to the Gentiles. What gratitude ought I not to possess at the remembrance of so inestimable a benefit! With what love should I not be penetrated for a Saviour so good and so full of tenderness?

2*nd Point.*—Jesus wishes we should work for the salvation of all.

Jesus, our Saviour, is also our Model. He wishes us to copy from His adorable Heart that universal zeal which labours efficaciously for the salvation of the entire world; but how can I enter into undertakings so vast—I, a weak,

powerless creature? The goodness of our Lord offers me a thousand means for this. He it is Who has inspired the establishment of so many pious associations, whose aim is either to spread the true Faith into distant countries, by means of the missions they supply, or to plant it in the hearts of young children, by procuring for them the benefit of a Christian education. There are other foundations established to instruct the ignorant; to afford sinners the means of conversion; to offer to souls that are weak and in danger asylums wherein their innocence may be sheltered from harm. If I wish to imitate the zeal of Jesus, and to fulfil the duties of a true Christian, I ought to co-operate in these works to the best of my power. What is my desire to correspond to the designs of Providence in such ways? Jesus will one day demand of me an account of the good I shall have effected. What shall I answer if I have been ever negligent? 'What!' He will say to me, 'I have shed the last drop of My Blood, and laid down My life for these souls, which were so dear to Me, and you, who pretended to love Me, have let them perish for want of help. No, you have not loved Me.' O Jesus, never permit that I should deserve such a reproach!

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us thank Him humbly for the zeal He has deigned to have for our salvation, a zeal worthy of a God-Saviour, and of which He has given us so many proofs. Let us beg of Him to make our heart like unto His, by communicating to it the zeal with which it burns for all mankind. Let us promise Him never to neglect the practice of any good works which His Providence may place within our power, which may be likely to aid the salvation of souls. Let us ask Him for that interior spirit necessary to render these works truly fruitful and meritorious.

Resolutions.—To discharge to-day with great zeal and renewed fervour all the duties of zeal comprised in our domestic duties. To examine seriously before God if we

could not add something to the good works which we have undertaken for the salvation of souls.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Jesus, zealous Lover of souls, make my heart like unto Thine.'

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

TWENTY-SEVENTH MEDITATION.

CONTEMPT FOR RICHES AND LOVE FOR THE POOR.

'And it came to pass, as Jesus walked with His disciples, that a certain man said to Him, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. Jesus answered him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.'—LUKE ix. 57, 58.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the road in which Jesus is walking with His disciples.

2*nd Prelude.*—Divine Jesus, Who, although the Master of Heaven and earth, hast deigned for love of me to embrace the most extreme poverty, vouchsafe to inspire me with a contempt for the riches of this world, and incline my heart to love and succour the poor for love of Thee.

1*st Point.*—The poverty of Jesus is extreme.

'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of Man has not whereon to lay His head' (Luke ix. 58). Such is the touching picture which Jesus Himself gives of His extreme poverty; far from possessing anything superfluous, He is in want of common necessaries, nor has He even an abode of His own where He can be at liberty to take the repose He so greatly needs after His fatigues and labours. But we must not limit ourselves to considering merely the exterior of this universal deprivation in which He lives; let us penetrate to the depths of His Sacred Heart, and seek therein its causes. Jesus has

embraced poverty willingly, and by His own choice; He loves it as His companion and cherished spouse; He supports with joy all the privations, and sufferings, and inconveniences, which result therefrom, because they afford Him an efficacious means of repairing the evils caused in the world by the attachment to riches and the disorderly love of the goods of this life. Jesus Christ teaches His true disciples — those who know how to penetrate the secrets of His adorable Heart—that the goods which pass away with time are too trifling to attach one's self to, and that a soul made to possess God in Heaven ought to despise the things of this world. If she possess them, she should use them with fear and circumspection, as she would make use of a deposit, of which she is but the steward; if she possess them not, let her rejoice in this feature of resemblance with Jesus. Are these sentiments mine? They are founded on the spirit of Jesus, which is diametrically opposed to that of the world, and without which there can be no true Christianity.

2nd Point.—We can offer Jesus succour in His poverty. 'The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head' (Luke ix. 58). However little may be our love for Jesus, we can hardly meditate on these words without envying the happiness of the zealous disciples and pious women who received Him in their houses, and had the consolation of procuring Him the necessaries of life. What a joy for us if we had been permitted to offer hospitality to such a Guest, to lavish on Him all the cares that love should inspire, and to hear from His divine lips the testimonies of His approval. This happiness may be ours. If the presence of Jesus on earth is not visible, it is not the less real, and His poverty is still the same. How many churches, where He resides, are unprovided with the necessary requirements for religious worship; how many tabernacles, where He is lodged, are even less becoming than the stable of Bethlehem! Oh, how pleasing is a soul

to the Sacred Heart of Jesus who is zealous for the decoration of His altars! But this is not the only good work we practise for Him. He lives in the person of His poor. 'As long as you did it to or of these My least brethren,' He has said to us, 'you did it to Me' (Matt. xxv. 40). What are my feelings, and, above all, what is my conduct towards Jesus, poor and abandoned? Can I hope to hear Him address to me one day these consoling words: 'I was hungry, and you gave Me to eat; thirsty, and you gave Me to drink; naked, and you clothed Me. Come, ye blessed of My Father, possess you the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' (Matt. xxv. 34, seq.).

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the Creator and Sovereign Lord of all the goods of heaven and earth. Let us thank Him with profound gratitude for having deigned to divest Himself of all for love of us. Let us ask Him for the spirit of detachment from the goods of this life. Let us offer Him all we can possibly do, whether for the decoration of His altars, or the relief of the poor, begging Him to be pleased to accept thereof. Let us ask of Him a true spirit of faith, which will make us behold Him alone in the objects of our liberality.

Resolutions.—To offer earnestly, frequently in the day, all that we possess to Jesus, begging Him to teach us to make a holy use of all. To watch over ourselves in our good works, that we may not allow any negligence or human views to be mixed up with our practice of them.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'The Son of Man hath not where to lay His head' (Luke ix. 58). 'As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it unto Me' (Matt. xxv. 40).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

TWENTY-EIGHTH MEDITATION.

JESUS COMMANDS THE WINDS AND THE SEA.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—'Behold a great tempest arose in the sea, so that the boat was covered with waves, but He was asleep; and they came to Him, and awaked Him, saying: Lord, save us, we perish. And Jesus saith to them: Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith? Then, rising up, He commanded the winds, and the sea, and there came a great calm' (Matt. viii. 24, 25, 26).

2*nd Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the sea of Galilee; it is agitated by the storm; the day is drawing to a close; Jesus and His disciples are in the ship.

3*rd Prelude.*—Deign to inspire me, O my divine Saviour, with that firm confidence which honours Thee and merits Thy protection.

1*st Point.*—Consider the persons.

Our divine Lord, overcome with fatigue and sleeping. The disciples are with Him in the ship. The crowd which He has just dismissed is dispersing on the shore. Soon it is quite lost sight of, for the darkness increases rapidly.

2*nd and* 3*rd Points.*—Listen to the words and consider the actions.

Jesus is asleep, but His Sacred Heart is watching over His dear disciples. Soon the tempest arises; the frail barque is tossed about on the waves and fills with water. The Apostles are terrified: their faith in the divinity of their Master is not firm enough, or sufficiently practical, for His presence alone to reassure them; yet it is strong enough to persuade them that He can and will help them. 'Lord,' they exclaim, 'save us, we perish' (Matt. viii. 25). This cry has resounded in the Sacred Heart of Jesus; He shields them with His protection; rises up, commands with authority the winds and the sea, and a

great calm ensues. It is thus, O my divine Master, that in order to restore peace to souls tried by affliction and temptation, Thou hast but to speak a single word. After having caused the danger to cease, Jesus addresses a gentle reproach to His disciples: 'Why are you fearful, O ye of little faith?' (Matt. viii. 26). What! has faith been wanting to them? They have hastened to call Jesus to their aid. Undoubtedly they have had faith enough to obtain miraculous protection; but the love of their divine Master demands yet greater perfection of them. He wishes to discern in them those dispositions of confidence and love whose effects are to banish all fear. O, my Jesus! place within my heart these holy dispositions!

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the all-powerful God, Who commands the elements and all creatures as He wills—as the infinitely good Master, Who is never nearer to His own than when He seems to be abandoning them to the dangers which surround them. Let us humble ourselves for having perhaps frequently been wanting in confidence in Him. Let us beg of Him that lively confidence which glorifies His Sacred Heart. Let us ask Him to come to our aid, and deliver us from all the perils by which we are surrounded.

Resolutions.—To produce frequently to-day acts of confidence in God, above all, if we be tried by any interior or exterior trouble.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Lord save us' (Matt. viii. 25).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

TWENTY-NINTH MEDITATION.

FAITH AND CONFIDENCE IN JESUS.

'And Jesus said to His disciples: Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?'—MATT. viii. 26.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent anew to yourself the lake of Genezareth agitated by the tempest. The shadows of evening—the frail barque which seems on the point of perishing.

2*nd Prelude.*—Divine Saviour, filled with kindness, whom confidence honours, vouchsafe so to strengthen my hope in Thee, that no trials, however severe, may be ever able to shake it.

1*st Point.*—We ought to confide in Jesus in the midst both of public and private calamities.

This earth is a land of exile, an abode of trial, subject to all sorts of evils, where public scourges and private calamities succeed each other, and are often united to afflict us. Those who know not God only behold in these divers events either the effects of the malice of men or of a certain combination of circumstances directed by a blind power they call *chance*. But for us, we distinguish, by the light of faith, the divine Hand which governs all things, and only permits trials and misfortunes to purify and sanctify His elect. We know that our Saviour is in the midst of us, and that He will come to our aid in the moment which He has marked out; nevertheless, is our faith and confidence always as unshaken as they should be in delays? Does it never happen to us to indulge misgiving thoughts or fears that our Lord will abandon us? Such thoughts are the greatest injury we can offer to His Sacred Heart. 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?' (Matt. viii. 26). Do we think that Jesus is less zealous for our solid interests than we are ourselves, or that He does not know best the proper time to deliver us from our troubles?

. . . O my Jesus, how often have I been ungrateful enough to forget that Thou dost watch over me with the kindness of a Father; pardon my diffidence, and deign to strengthen in me that loving confidence which Thy goodness merits on so many titles.

2nd Point.—We ought to hope in Jesus in the midst of temptations and interior trials.

If it requires solid virtue in order to preserve confidence in the midst of exterior trials, stronger virtue still is necessary to do so in order to maintain an assurance of peace in those interior tempests which are permitted by our Lord to agitate His chosen ones. Often the soul seems tossed about in a thousand ways, in a universal deluge of trouble; she knows not which way to turn or what means to employ; it seems to her at such times that Jesus has abandoned her, yet He is never nearer to her than in such moments of trial. It is related of St. Catherine of Siena that after a violent and humiliating temptation which she had surmounted victoriously, she said one day to our Lord: 'Where wast Thou, my adorable Spouse, while so many wicked thoughts haunted my imagination?' 'I was in the depth of thy heart,' He replied; 'I it was who inspired thee with such a lively horror for the temptations with which thou wast tormented, and it is to My help that thou art indebted for the victory.' It is thus our divine Lord always comes to our assistance when the storm is at its height. He reposes in the midst of our heart. He seems to sleep peacefully, but His slumber resembles that of the lion, which sleeps with its eyes open. He watches attentively the progress of the trial. He is reckoning our efforts, and provided we do but remain faithful to Him, He will not fail to arise and command the tempest, and cause peace and a calm to ensue. Have I sufficiently understood that our hope in our divine Lord cannot be too great? Have I maintained faith in His protection, and confidence in His goodness, in the midst of temptations and interior darknesses?

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the all powerful Master, Who directs everything, permitting or opposing the evils which afflict the earth as He pleases; also as a Protector full of goodness, who does not cease to watch over us and cover us with the shadow of His wings. Let us thank Him for such Fatherly care, and humble ourselves at His feet, for our repeated want of confidence, making reparation thereof to His Sacred Heart, since this disposition is a keenly felt outrage to Him. Let us ask Him for His true Spirit, which is one of faith and confidence. Promise never again to doubt the love of our good Jesus.

Resolutions.—The same as in the preceding contemplation, page 67.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Praise the Lord, for He is good' (Ps. cxxxv. 1); or, 'He shall neither slumber nor sleep, that keepeth Israel' (Ps. cxx. 4).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

THIRTIETH CONTEMPLATION.

JESUS CURES A PARALYTIC.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—'Jesus again entered into Capernaum. . . . And they brought one sick of the palsy. When Jesus had seen their faith, He saith to the sick of the palsy: Son, thy sins are forgiven thee. And there were some of the scribes sitting there, and thinking in their hearts: Why doth this man speak thus? He blasphemeth. Which Jesus presently knowing in His spirit that they so thought within themselves, saith to them: Why think you these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven thee; or to

say, Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house? But that you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, He saith to the sick of the palsy: I say to thee, Arise, take up thy bed and go into thy house. And immediately he arose, and taking up his bed, went his way in the sight of all' (Mark ii. 1-12).

2nd Prelude.—Represent to yourself the house which Jesus has entered; it is so filled with people there is no room left in it.

3rd Prelude.—Inspire me, O my divine Jesus, with faith and confidence worthy of Thy power and goodness, that so I may deserve to obtain the pardon of all my sins and the cure of my soul.

1st Point.—Consider the persons. Our adorable Master, with His usual gentle majesty. The Apostles. The crowd which is assembled within the house and around the door. It presses forward to listen to the word of God and to see some miracle. The man sick of the palsy on his bed, not able to move. He is the image of a soul the slave of sin or tepidity. The Scribes are there, maliciously watching Jesus. What is He about to do?

2nd and 3rd Points.—Consider the actions and listen to the words. Some men bring in a sick man extended on his bed. Their charity, and the faith of the invalid, fail not to give pleasure to the Sacred Heart of our Divine Lord. However, a dense crowd obstructs every avenue. A strong faith and active charity let nothing disconcert them; those who carry the sick man ascend to the roof of the house, and making an opening there, let down the paralytic on his bed to the feet of Jesus. Our divine Lord is moved with such great faith. He addresses these words of peace to the poor invalid: 'Son, thy sins are forgiven thee' (Mark ii. 5). O Sacred Heart of my Jesus! how well do I recognise Thee! As yet no favour has been asked of Thee, and Thou dost grant a greater one than that about to be solicited. The words which Jesus has just spoken have been heard by all; the im-

pressions they have made are varied, according to the different dispositions of the hearers. They carry with them a sweet peace to the heart of the invalid; they strengthen the faith of some and excite the curiosity of others. The proud Scribes are irritated by them, and take Him for a blasphemer. Jesus, who reads their thoughts, reproaches them with the perversity of their hearts, and adds with dignity: 'Which is easier, to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, take up thy bed and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins, He saith to the sick of the palsy: I say to thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thy house' (Mark ii. 9-12).

At the same moment a second miracle proves the first one; the sick man, perfectly sound in body and soul, arises, takes up his bed, and goes his way in the sight of all. Then, seized with astonishment, the witnesses of the miracle give glory to God, saying: 'We have never seen the like' (Mark ii. 12).

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as a God of power and goodness, Who refuses nothing to confidence accompanied with generous efforts; also as the supreme Wisdom, Who knows how to draw from the malice of His enemies the cause of their confusion. Let us present ourselves before Him as the paralytic did, and try to excite His compassion at the sight of our miseries. Let us beg of Him to say unto us, in the depth of our heart, the consoling words: 'My child, thy sins are forgiven thee.' Let us listen also to the command which He has given us to arise from the state of tepidity which keeps us in idleness, and promise to obey Him.

Resolutions.—Not to pray negligently nor perform any of our duties carelessly to-day, and to ask Jesus frequently with great confidence to cure us, or to preserve us from spiritual paralysis.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'In Thee, O Lord, I have hoped; let me never be confounded' (Ps. xxx. 2).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

THIRTY-FIRST MEDITATION.

A WOMAN IS HEALED BY TOUCHING THE HEM OF THE GARMENT OF JESUS.

'A great multitude followed Him, and they thronged Him. . . . And a woman who was under an issue of blood twelve years . . . came in the crowd, behind Him, and touched His garment . . . for she said, If I shall touch but His garment, I shall be whole. . . . And forthwith . . . she felt, in her body, that she was healed of the evil.'—MARK v. 24-27.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the road in which Jesus is walking, followed by a crowd of people.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant, O my Jesus, that, possessing the faith, confidence, and respect of the woman Thy power did heal, I may deserve, as she did, to experience their precious effects.

1*st Point.*—An humble confidence obtains all things of Jesus.

'A woman who was troubled with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment. For she said within herself: If I shall touch only His garment, I shall be healed' (Matt. ix. 20, 21). The conduct of this woman is one of the most perfect examples with which the Gospel presents us of a lively confidence accompanied with humility. She hopes for her cure from Jesus so firmly that she does not even consider it necessary, in order to obtain it, to make known to Him her malady. She is humble, and leaves it to others, whom she deems more worthy than she is, to engage the attention

of her divine Master, even for an instant, to have the honour of speaking to Him or attracting His looks; she goes behind Him and touches the hem of His garment with great respect. Let us now compare our conduct and sentiments with those of this woman.

When we wish to obtain some favour, does it not very often happen that we have but imperfect confidence, a confidence which is diminished by the sense of our miseries, because it is founded rather on ourselves than on the goodness and the merits of Jesus? Again, is it not only too usual with us to find we prefer the kind of distinction which accompanies heavenly favours to those favours themselves? O, my Jesus! grant that, imitating the sick woman Thou didst cure to-day, I may seek from Thee purely the health of my soul, without desiring that Thy favours in my regard should come to the knowledge of others. Teach me to receive with humility and guard in silence the favours which in Thy infinite goodness Thou mayst please to favour me with.

2nd Point.—All is life-giving in Jesus. As in the balm plant all is odoriferous, the root, the stem, the leaves, the flower, and the fruit; in like manner all in our divine Lord diffuses and produces life. Not alone is His divine hand, His word, His will efficacious in the operation of His wonderful works, but even His garments participate in His miraculous power. The sick woman in the Gospel knew this through a secret inspiration. She hastens to experience its effects, and obtains what she hopes for.

Why do I not know how to profit, as she did, of so great an advantage — I, who have the happiness, not merely of touching once the garment of Jesus, but of receiving this same Jesus so often in the midst of my heart? It is because I am wanting in the necessary dispositions. Jesus, knowing in Himself the virtue that had proceeded from Him, turning to the multitude, said, 'Who hath touched My garments? And His disciples said to Him, Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and dost Thou

say, Who hath touched me?' (Mark v. 30, 31). Many of those who pray press on Jesus with the crowd, that is to say, they approach very near unto Him; nevertheless, they do not obtain from Him the favours they so earnestly desire, because they are wanting in faith and humility, and, above all, in confidence. But they who, like the sick woman in the Gospel, know *how* to touch Him, that is, how to pray to Him in a way that will reach His Sacred Heart, will experience, as she did, the effects of His almighty power and infinite goodness. Is it not just that I should endeavour to be of the latter number—I, who have been called by so many interior inspirations and chosen favours to know His divine heart in a special manner?

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him once again as the Worker of miracles, and testify unto Him our gratitude and love, as to a Saviour so full of mercy, Who diffuses His benefits everywhere. Let us humble ourselves at His feet for our imperfect sentiments in his regard, and for the tepidity of the prayers we address to Him. Let us beg of Him to hear us, nevertheless, and to cure our soul of all its infirmities and weaknesses: and, above all, to cause His glory to be promoted through the graces He deigns to grant us, notwithstanding the depth of our unworthiness.

Resolutions.—To animate all our prayers with faith, humility, and confidence. To make to-day several interior acts, at least of the one virtue the most needful to us of the three.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'O Lord hear my prayer, and let my cry come unto Thee" (Ps. ci. 2).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

THIRTY-SECOND CONTEMPLATION.

THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS IS RAISED TO LIFE.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—'And then cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, named Jairus: and seeing Him, falleth down at His feet. And he besought Him much, saying: My daughter is at the point of death; come, lay Thy hand upon her, . . . that she may live. And He went with him, and a great multitude followed Him. . . While he was yet speaking, some come from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying: Thy daughter is dead. . . But Jesus, having heard the word that was spoken, saith to the ruler: Fear not, only believe. And they come to the house of the ruler, . . . and He seeth a tumult, and people weeping and wailing much. And going in, He saith to them: Why make you this a-do and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed Him to scorn. But He, having put them all out, taketh the father and mother of the damsel, and them that were with Him, and entereth into where she was lying. And taking the damsel by the hand, He saith to her: Damsel, I say to thee, Arise. And immediately the damsel rose up and walked; and she was twelve years old' (Mark v. 22-24, 35-43).

2*nd Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the road through which Jesus walked, then the ruler of the synagogue's house.

3*rd Prelude.*—The miraculous fact, upon which I am about to meditate, will bring back to my memory, O my God, the wonders which Thy grace has worked in my favour; grant that, remembering Thy benefit, I may conceive towards Thee a lively and deep gratitude.

1*si Point.*—Consider the persons. Jesus, surrounded by a multitude, which presses Him on all sides. He always exhibits in His Sacred Person the same gentle dignity and grave majesty. At His feet is an afflicted father, solicit-

ing the cure of his child. Further off, in the house of the unhappy father, the young girl has just expired. The afflicted family surround her, and the neighbours are there to share in their grief. What will follow this sad scene? Jesus is drawing near. What a strong motive for hope! O, my Saviour! my soul was dead to grace, and all the court of Heaven was grieving over my fate; but my good angel, and Mary my holy Mother, have interceded with Thee in my behalf, and Thou comest with infinite goodness to restore it to life again.

2nd Point.—Listen to the words. The ruler of the synagogue prays Jesus earnestly: 'Lord,' he says, 'My daughter is at the point of death; come, lay Thy hand upon her, that she may live' (Mark v. 23). This prayer has penetrated the heart of our divine Master. He follows Jairus without answering him. As He is on the road, they come to say the sick child is dead. Jesus reassures the afflicted father. 'Fear not,' He says to him, 'only believe' (Mark v. 36). O, Jesus! faith and confidence are, then, the infallible means of obtaining all things from Thy infinite goodness. They arrive: the house is filled with the relatives and friends who weep and utter loud cries of grief. 'Why make you this ado and weep?' Jesus says. 'The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth' (Mark v. 39). To those who believe in Jesus, death is but a sleep, from which He will one day deliver them. Let us listen to the powerful words with which He addresses the child. 'Damsel, I say to thee, Arise' (Mark v. 41); and at the same instant she is brought back from death to life. O, Jesus! I have also often heard Thy divine words when I was dead in sin. Thou hast not disdained to call me Thy child, commanding me kindly to arise from my fallen state. And when, purified by my tears and Thy precious blood, I have been in dispositions to understand language more tender still, Thou hast said: 'Arise, my love, my fair one, and come, hide thyself in the clefts of the rock' (Cant. ii. 13, 14). And Thou hast received

me in that mysterious cleft, Thy own divine Heart. Grant me grace, O my Lord, to remain there for ever.

3rd Point.—Consider the actions. No sooner has Jesus heard the prayer of the ruler of the synagogue than He makes it His duty to follow him, teaching us by His example never to defer doing good when we can do it immediately. Arrived at the house, He sends away the crowd; two mysterious significations are herein contained. It is not in the midst of tumult that Jesus likes to work His powerful miracles. He wishes to find us alone. Again, He conceals the sight of this miracle from the greater number, in order to teach us that if for general edification it is sometimes necessary to do good before men, we must oftener still keep it secret through humility. He enters then, followed only by the father and mother of the child, and by Peter, James and John, His three especial confidants, into the place where the young girl was laid. What must have been the feelings of the parents of the child at this moment? And what those of the tender Heart of Jesus? He draws near, takes the child by the hand, and commands her to arise. Immediately she returns to life, arises, and walks. Jesus restores her to her parents, telling them to keep the miracle secret.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us offer Him respectfully and lovingly our homages of adoration and gratitude, thanking Him especially for the graces of conversion He has granted us. Let us beg of Him to preserve us from falling again, and also implore of Him to extricate poor unhappy sinners from the miserable condition in which they are languishing.

Resolutions.—To perform all our actions to-day in a spirit of gratitude.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—Jesus, Author of Life, have mercy on us!

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

THIRTY-THIRD MEDITATION.

THE POND OF THE LAW OF GRACE.

'Now there is at Jerusalem, a pond, called Probatica, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick, of blind, of lame, of withered: waiting for the moving of the water. And an Angel of the Lord descended at certain times into the pond; and the water was moved. And he that went down first into the pond after the motion of the water was made whole, of whatsoever infirmity he lay under.'—JOHN v. 2-4.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the pond. It is a reservoir of water, in which the sheep destined for the sacrifices are washed: it is surrounded with galleries filled with the sick and infirm.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant, O my Saviour, that, esteeming as I should do the reservoir with which Thou hast been pleased to enrich Thy Church, I may know how to profit by so precious an advantage, and return Thee worthy acts of thanksgiving for the same.

1*st Point.*—The waters of the pond are figures of those of Baptism and Penance. 'He that went down first into the pond after the motion of the water was made whole of whatsoever infirmity he lay under' (John v. 4). It was a very great advantage for the people of Israel to possess, in the midst of their capital, this pond, whose miraculous and infallible virtue procured health of body to him who had the happiness to enter it the first. But, inasmuch as the law of grace greatly surpasses that of the Jewish law, so, in like proportion, does the reservoir of the Christians surpass that of the Synagogue. The waters of the latter were sanctified only by victims of no value in themselves, whereas in the former the precious Blood of Jesus Christ Himself is prepared as a sacred bath in which to cure the infirmities, not merely of a single individual, but of all who desire to be purified therein. There are for the latter, as for the former, moments of grace, in which the waters

are moved by the Angel of the Lord; the precious stirrings of a jubilee or a mission put heaven and earth, as it were, in movement to procure the conversion of sinners. These are overflowing times of God's special favours, and He does not limit the effects of His mercies to them; the efficacious waters of Penance are always ready to operate a cure for all those who plunge themselves therein, whatsoever their malady may be. What an inestimable benefit! Have I, up to the present, been as grateful for it as it deserves? Do I, above all, know how to profit of so precious an advantage?

2nd Point.—The Sacred Heart of Jesus is a second reservoir, still more precious than the first. God, in his infinite goodness, has not only prepared for us a salutary bath, calculated to give and to restore to souls sullied by sin that sanctity, without which we cannot enter heaven; but He has also opened for us another reservoir, infinitely more precious still, where we may find perfect health. The latter is the same Heart of Jesus, the hallowed source of His precious Blood, of which the former is but the reservoir. In the first, sins are effaced, but in the second virtue is perfected; we plunge into it by confidence in Jesus, by love for Jesus, and by the participation of the Body and Blood of Jesus; we remain in It by union with Jesus; the former compels our tears, the second commands our joys. 'You shall draw water with joy,' said the Prophet, 'from the saving fountains, and in those days you shall say, Praise the Lord, and call upon His name' (Isaias xiii. 3, 4). It was after this most desirable source that the Prophet King thirsted, when he said: 'As the hart panteth after the fountains of living water, so doth my soul thirst after Thee, O God' (Ps. lxi. 1). Do I not desire to plunge myself into this ocean of honesty, into this abyss of mercy, into this adorable source of all virtues? Thy Sacred Heart, O Jesus, is everything to me. Open It to me, and deign to harbour me within It, and all my happiness shall be never more to leave It.

Colloquy with our divine Lord.—Let us adore Him as the fountain-head of all grace. Let us thank Him, with the deepest and most tender gratitude, for having deigned to shed His Blood to cure our infirmities and to open to us His Sacred Heart, that we may draw life therefrom, as from its source. Let us humble ourselves with simplicity and confidence for the little care we have taken to put to profit so many blessings, and beg of Him to discover to us their value. Let us make Him all the promises of fidelity that love shall suggest to us.

Resolutions.—To unite all our actions to-day to the merits of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. To renew our fervour, and approach the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist with due preparation.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'You shall draw waters with joy out of the Saviour's fountains' (Isa. xii. 3).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

THIRTY-FIFTH MEDITATION.

JESUS CURES A MAN WHO HAS BEEN ILL FOR THIRTY EIGHT YEARS.

'Now there was a certain man there that had been eight and thirty years under his infirmity. . . . And Jesus said to him: Wilt thou be made whole? The infirm man answered Him: Sir, I have no man when the water is troubled, to put me into the pond. . . . Jesus said to him: Arise, take up thy bed and walk . . . and immediately the man was made whole.'—JOHN v. 5-9.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1st Prelude.—Represent to yourself anew the pond surrounded by porches, where a number of sick and infirm are lying.

2nd Prelude.—Vouchsafe, O my Jesus, to grant me by

Thy grace the twofold disposition of a real good-will and perfect confidence in Thee.

1*st Point.*—The want of good-will is the principal obstacle to the cure of our soul.

'There was a man there who had been eight and thirty years under His infirmity. Him when Jesus had seen lying, and knew that he had been now a long time, He saith to him: Wilt thou be made whole?' (John v. 5, 6). This question of our divine Lord had for its end to fix the attention of the infirm man and excite his confidence, preparing him thereby for the miracle of which he was about to be the object. If Jesus were to address this question to us, what answer should we make? Without doubt we desire to be delivered from our spiritual miseries, but are these desires effectual? It is into this we should examine. Three sorts of persons wish for this precious cure: the first may be compared to an invalid who really desires to be freed from his malady, but without its costing him any trouble or pain, so that as soon as there is question of a bitter remedy, or of bearing a painful operation, he gives up his cure. The second class resemble those invalids who consent to subject themselves to a regimen and to certain simple remedies, but who place limits to what is required for their cure. But the third description have such an ardent desire of arriving at the end they propose to themselves, that in order to attain it, they accept all that a skilful physician may judge necessary to make them suffer. The first class of invalids, made up of those tepid and cowardly souls, who acknowledge their dangerous state, but will do nothing to ameliorate it, will never be cured. Those of the second class represent the souls who, labouring to correct themselves with only half a will, render their spiritual cure slow and very uncertain. But the third class resemble the fervent souls who, refusing God nothing, draw down on themselves the abundance of His graces, and thereby ensure the success of their desires and efforts. In which of these

classes can I take my place? To what extent does my fervour and generosity reach, when there is question of making sacrifices, rendered necessary for the entire extirpation of that which displeases God in my soul?

2nd Point.—Jesus alone can work the cure of our soul. 'The infirm man answered: Lord, I have no one when the water is troubled to put me into the pond' (John v. 5). The cure of the soul, like that of the body, must be assisted by certain means of which man is the agent. God, by means of His creatures, instructs, consoles, and encourages us, and forwards us in the way of perfection; but creatures have no power to aid us apart from that which God communicates to them, so that if He withdraws His all-powerful hand, we should have to say with truth: I have no one to assist me (John v. 7). From this principle two truths follow: the first, that all creatures together cannot aid us, unless God bless their efforts in our regard, and become Himself, by His grace, the Life of the aid they procure us. The second is, that when all creatures fail us, if God remain to us, we have lost nothing; God is everything: He contains *all;* His all-powerful action subsists apart from any cause; He can, when He pleases, and without human agency, say to a soul: Arise from thy tepidity and weakness, and walk in the ways of fidelity and fervour. It is true, then, my God, that to lose courage when Thou dost refuse us certain exterior helps on which we had reckoned, is to be wanting in faith. It is also true that we have never greater reason to hope in Thee than in those moments when all human aid is wrested from us.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us render our homage of adoration, love and thanksgiving to His power, His goodness and divine wisdom. Let us enter into the different sentiments of joy, respect, and gratitude which must have animated the infirm man in the Gospel, when he found himself cured after thirty eight years of suffering. Let us pray our Lord to strengthen in us solid and perfect con-

fidence in Him. Let us abandon ourselves unreservedly into His hands, begging Him to cure us, when and how He pleases.

Resolutions.—Frequently during the day to raise our heart to Jesus, asking of Him a great desire for the cure of our soul, and a perfect abandonment into His hands.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Arise and walk' (John v. 8).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

THIRTY-FIFTH MEDITATION.

JESUS THE LIFE OF THE JUST AND THE RESURRECTION OF SINNERS.

'Jesus said to the Jews: He who heareth My word and believeth Him that sent Me, hath life everlasting. . . . Amen, Amen, I say unto you, that the hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.'—JOHN v. 24, 25.

Remark.—It was on the Sabbath-day that Jesus had cured the man who had been ill for thirty eight years, and had ordered him to take up his bed. The Jews carped at this pretended violation of the Lord's day of rest. Jesus replied to their reproaches by sublime revelations on His Divinity, and on His union with His Father. At the termination of these lofty truths occur the words which are the subject of this meditation.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1st Prelude.—Represent to yourself a street in a public place in Jerusalem.

2nd Prelude.—Lord Jesus, I believe that Thou art 'the Resurrection and the Life' (John xi. 25). But do Thou increase my faith, render it lively and efficacious. Grant

that I may be worthy to possess for all eternity that blessed life of which Thou art the Source, and which Thou dost communicate to Thy elect.

1st Point.—Jesus is the Life of the just. 'He who heareth My word, and believeth Him that sent Me, hath life everlasting' (John v. 24). In order to meditate with greater profit on these words, let us begin by recalling to our mind that He who addresses them unto us is the Author of life itself. 'As the Father,' He says, 'hath life in Himself, so He hath given to the Son also to have life in Himself' (John v. 26). The Eternal Word is like unto God the Father, a Being sovereignly excellent in Himself. Though all the external works of the Blessed Trinity are common to the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, yet we attribute to the Son in a special manner the communication to us of our title to the life of grace, as the sole Mediator between an outraged God and His guilty creature, and it is He who puts us in a state to receive it at the same time that He confers it. Let us, then, listen to what He deigns to say to us. 'He that heareth My word'—who receives it with respect and seeks to understand it in order to reduce it to practice; and 'who believeth in Him that sent Me'—that is to say, in the legitimacy of My divine mission—'hath life everlasting' (John v. 24). The latter is not only promised him, but he already possesses it. The faith which he has in Me, by which he regulates his conduct, gives him a right to it; he is united to Me by sanctifying grace, and the life which I communicate to him remains by its nature for ever, unless he wilfully lose it by mortal sin. O, my Saviour, I believe in Thee, I receive Thy words with respect and joy; give me, then, an abundant share in that blessed life promised to those who listen to Thee.

2nd Point.—Jesus is the Resurrection of sinners. 'The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live' (John v. 25). To create men in the state of innocence, our Lord needed only an act of His all-powerful

and sovereign goodness ; but to restore them to that happy state, and give back to them the life of grace, it required that all the contrivances of His infinite wisdom should be brought into requisition ; this is the masterpiece of the God Saviour. It is to this God made Man, come upon earth to seek that which was lost and to destroy the empire of death, that it belongs to call forth from the tomb of iniquity the souls buried there, and to offer to them the advantage of a precious resurrection. He calls upon all to receive from Him this inestimable benefit. 'The hour cometh,' saith He, 'and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of God' (John v. 25). Happy are they if they do not harden their hearts to that voice, for if it be all-powerful to encourage and support the docile soul, it does not force a rebellious will, which is always free to resist. Our divine Saviour adds, 'They that hear it shall live' (John v. 25). A consoling promise and divine assurance given to all those who shall receive the word of salvation. Oh ! if the fate of sinners interests me, if the glory of Jesus moves me, what zeal ought I not to manifest to aid the designs of the Sacred Heart of this good Master, by contributing with all my power to make Him known and loved ! Never permit, O my Jesus, that these great truths should find me insensible; fill my soul with Thy Spirit, and deign to make use of me to prepare souls dead to grace to receive Thy word.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the supreme Author of life, return fervent acts of thanksgiving to His Sacred Heart for the goodness with which He calls all sinners, and us in particular, to receive from Him the precious life of grace. Let us beg His mercy for those poor souls who are so obstinate as to refuse it, and implore it earnestly for ourselves, that so we may live but for Him alone.

Resolutions.—To raise our hearts to Jesus frequently in the day, asking Him to keep us in His grace, and bestowing it also on poor sinners to bring them to repentance.

To perform all our actions in union with Him, that we may live the life of grace of which He is the Source.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'He who heareth My word hath life everlasting' (John v. 24).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

THIRTY-SIXTH MEDITATION.

THE INTERIOR RULE OF THE JUDGMENTS AND ACTIONS OF JESUS CHRIST.

'As I hear, so I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not My will, but the will of Him that sent Me.'—JOHN v. 30.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—The same as in the preceding meditation, page 84.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant me grace, O Jesus, always to regulate my judgments and sentiments after Thine, that so, after Thy example, I may do in all things not my own will, but that of Thy Heavenly Father.

1*st Point.*—The interior rule of the judgments of Jesus Christ. 'As I hear, so do I judge, and My judgment is just' (John v. 30). These words teach us what was the rule of the judgments of Jesus Christ, and what ought also to be ours. We judge too often of things according to their exterior appearance and the view which the different interests of our passions give them in our eyes. Jesus, on the contrary, judges of them according to the interior testimony of the Holy Spirit. Fixed in perfect recollection of mind, notwithstanding the most distracting and multiplied occupations, He knew how to make a solitude in the midst of His soul, where He entered into consultation with His Father and the Holy Ghost, and from this emanated all His judgments. Without

doubt it was impossible for His Sacred Humanity, united as it was to the Divinity, not to be always occupied therewith, but He was not the less exact in using the means necessary for others to maintain and preserve interior recollection, for He wished to give them the example, and merit for them the grace. Oh, how wisely should we judge of all things, if, faithful in imitating Jesus, we erected like Him, in the depth of our heart, a species of tribunal, where, often retiring with God, we consulted Him in all things before we pronounced our judgments! Alas! the goods of this world and the enjoyments of life would only then appear to us what they really are, empty and passing advantages, short and superficial pleasures; the vain satisfactions of pride and self-love would only be, in our eyes, like stupefying vapours, which trouble our reason and stain our soul. On the contrary, crosses, contradictions, humiliations, and trials would become agreeable to us, for we should behold in them the priceless advantages they procure for faithful souls. Who will give me, O Jesus, to appreciate all these things by so wise a rule? Thus have the Saints judged of them, and thus shall I judge of them at the hour of my death. Do not permit, O my Saviour, that I should wait for that last moment to be enlightened in Thy Presence, and to walk in that light.

2nd Point.—Interior rule of the actions of Jesus Christ. 'I seek not My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me' (John v. 30). If the mind of Jesus, our divine Model, was always occupied with the presence of His Father, His Sacred Heart was not the less filled with this divine object of all His affections; and as it is from the heart that the will proceeds, and from the will our deeds, every action of this adorable Son was accomplished for the love of His Father and in conformity with His most holy will. Let us try to penetrate to the centre of the loving Heart of Jesus, and there study the sacred workings of the Spirit through which He acted. The latter, the link of love between the Father and the Son, manifested interiorly

to the Son the will of the Father, and the Sacred Heart of Jesus, attentive and docile to its least inspirations, acted faithfully up to them. It is thus that a Christian soul, prevented by the grace of God, ought to follow in all things, not the impressions of nature, but the inspirations of grace. It is very difficult to discern these divine inspirations when the mind is not recollected, or when one is strongly attached to self; but if we give ourselves with a good will to the twofold practice of recollection and mortification, above all to interior mortification, the Spirit of God, which is goodness itself, does not delay to manifest His Presence. He enlightens faithful souls, directs and supports them, renews their fervour continually, and raises them by degrees to a conformity with His divine Son. How can I refrain from desiring such precious advantages? Again, how can I neglect the means which our Lord places within my reach to procure them?

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the divine Model of every virtue and the Master of the interior life. Let us humble ourselves at His feet for the negligence which has impeded our progress in this precious life. Let us beg His assistance, promising Him to use courageously all the means which His goodness offers us to second grace, and implant His holy Spirit within us.

Resolutions.—To practise interior recollection to-day. To combat that particular fault which leads us the most frequently to resist grace.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'I will hear what the Lord my God shall speak to me in the depth of my heart' (Ps. lxxxiv. 9).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

THIRTY-SEVENTH MEDITATION.

TRUE LIFE IS TO BE FOUND IN JESUS ALONE.

'Search the Scriptures, for you think in them to have life everlasting; and the same are they that give testimony of Me. And you will not come to Me that you may have life . . . How can you believe, who receive glory one from another: and the glory which is from God alone you do not seek?'—JOHN v. 39, seq.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 84.

2*nd Prelude.*—Divine Jesus, adorable Author of life, who dost communicate Thyself to humble and pure souls, grant that I may seek Thee with great purity of heart, and that, having found Thee, I may never more be separated from Thee.

1*st Point.*—'Search the Scriptures,' said Jesus to the Jews, 'for you think in them to have life everlasting' (John v. 39). A perverse will leads the mind astray; we are easily blind to that which we fear to behold, and from thence arise erroneous judgments and false consciences. The Jews desired eternal life; but as, in order to find it, it seemed to them too painful to renounce the goods of the present life, they would not seek it as followers of a poor, humble and mortified Messias. Their folly, O my God, was very great; but is mine less, when I would gain Heaven without walking in the footsteps of the humble and suffering Jesus? The Jews refused to recognise in Him the promised Messias: my heart does not refuse Him this glorious title; I adore in him the Saviour of my soul, but do I not too often forget that He is my Model, and the Chieftain under whom I am to combat? O, my divine Lord, put a stop to such inconsistent folly. I desire to correspond with Thy grace; perfect Thou my faith by rendering it practical.

2nd Point.—Humility is necessary in order to have faith in Jesus Christ.

'How can you believe, who receive glory one from another?' (John v. 44). It was pride that blinded the Jews and made them refuse to recognise Jesus; and it is the same dangerous disposition which hinders Christians from owning Him courageously, and following Him with generosity. When this pride leads us to betray our conscience, for fear of being blamed by others, it is called human respect. When it causes us to expose our innocence, in order to satisfy a frivolous desire of being seen and admired, it is called vanity. When it leads us to do good, with a view of obtaining the esteem and praise of creatures, it becomes ostentation. It is called self-love, when, attaching ourselves to our own ideas and to our own will, it hinders us from owning our short-comings, and makes us rebel against the humiliations which Jesus sends us to make us like unto Himself. But, under whatever aspect we view it, it is an obstacle to the effects which faith should produce; weakening in the soul the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and introducing in its place the spirit of the world, its mortal enemy. Am I entirely secure from its dangerous attacks? Do I not expose myself, by following its dangerous impressions, to merit from my divine Master this reproach: 'You will not come to me, that you may have life?' (John v. 40). O, my Saviour, to whom shall I go if I keep away from Thee? 'Thou hast the words of eternal life' (John vi. 69). No, I will no longer be unfaithful to Thee; give me Thy love; fill me with Thy Spirit, and I will never leave Thee either in time or in eternity.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as our Saviour, our Master, and our Light. Let us ask Him to make us understand that we cannot attain eternal life except by union with Him. Let us humble ourselves at His feet for the infidelities with which our conscience may reproach us. Let us pray for those weak souls who are

little practised in sincere humility. Let us ask all the aid for ourselves of which we stand in need.

Resolutions.—To unite myself to Jesus to-day by frequent acts of faith and love. If any opportunity should offer of setting aside human respect, to embrace it generously.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'He who believeth in Me hath everlasting life' (John xi. 26).

Prayer.—Receive, O Lord, etc., page 54.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

THIRTY-EIGHTH CONTEMPLATION.

THE PENITENT AT THE FEET OF JESUS.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—'One of the Pharisees desired Jesus to eat with him. And He went into his house and sat down to meat. And behold a woman that was in the city, a sinner, when she knew that He sat at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster-box of ointment. And standing behind at His feet, she began to wash His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair, and she kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment . . And Jesus said to her: 'Thy sins are forgiven thee' (Luke vii. 36, seq.).

2*nd Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the house of the Pharisee; a great number of guests are at table with Jesus.

3*rd Prelude.*—Grant, O my Jesus, that, imitating the contrition and love of this holy penitent, I may merit, as she did, to receive the remission of my numberless sins.

1*st Point.*—Consider the persons: Jesus, full of gentleness and purity . . . The penitent woman prostrate at His feet, solely occupied with her love and her sorrow . . .

The Pharisee who is watching Jesus . . . All the guests who also are observing Magdalen, and awaiting the words of our divine Lord.

2nd Point.—Listen to the words. The mute but eloquent language of the heart of Magdalen . . . it is understood by the Sacred Heart of her Lord . . . The interior words of the Pharisee: 'This man, if He were a prophet, would know surely who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him, that she is a sinner' (Luke vii. 39). He was deceiving himself; she was no longer an unworthy sinner, but a holy penitent . . . Jesus knew this, and addressing Himself to him who was rashly judging her, He said: 'Simon, I have somewhat to say to thee.' Who answered, 'Master, say it;' and all the guests listened . . . 'A certain creditor had two debtors; the one owed him five hundred pence, the other fifty. And whereas they had not wherewith to pay, he forgave them both. Which therefore of the two loveth him most?" (Luke vii. 40, seq.). Magdalen has already caught the meaning of that parable; she understands that he to whom the most has been forgiven should love the most. Simon, whose comprehension is duller, does not foresee the consequences of the answer he is about to make, "I suppose," he said, "that he to whom the most has been forgiven should love the most." And Jesus said to him, "Thou hast judged rightly." Then, turning towards the penitent woman, He said unto Simon, "Dost thou see this woman? I entered into thy house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet; but she with tears hath washed My feet, and with her hair hath wiped them. Thou gavest Me no kiss; but she since she came in hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but she with ointment hath anointed my feet. Wherefore I say to thee, Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much . . . Then, addressing Himself to Magdalen, He said, Thy sins are forgiven thee . . . thy faith hath made thee safe; go in peace" (Luke vii. 43—50).

3rd Point.—Consider the actions. The courageous conduct of Magdalen: she exposes herself generously to humiliations, and wishes her repentance to be as public as her sins had been . . . The tears she sheds, with which she waters the feet of her Divine Master . . . The kisses with which she covers them . . . The holy lavishness with which she uses her perfumes to honour Him. The pardon which Jesus grants her.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as a Saviour full of goodness and mercy. Let us offer Him the love and contrition of the holy Magdalen, and thank Him for the favours with which He was pleased to overwhelm this illustrious penitent, begging of Him to fill us, as He did her, with an ardent love for Him, and a lively horror of sin, and making a sincere act of contrition for all the sins we have ever committed. Let us promise to imitate Magdalen, by making reparation for our past conduct by persevering fervour and fidelity, asking Him for the grace we shall need for this end.

Resolutions.—To prostrate ourselves frequently in the day at the feet of Jesus, asking Him for the pardon of our sins and the gift of perfect contrition. To bear in a spirit of penance any trials or humiliations that we may meet with to-day.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much' (Luke vii. 47).

Prayer.—Receive, O Lord, etc., page 54.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

THIRTY-NINTH MEDITATION.

LOVE REPAIRS ALL OUR OFFENCES.

'Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much.'—LUKE vii. 47.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourselves again the house of the Pharisee, where Jesus is at table, and Magdalen at His feet.

2*nd Prelude.*—Vouchsafe, O my Jesus, to enkindle within me the fire of Thy pure love, that its heavenly flame may purify my soul from all its stains; and may its divine ardour repair the sins I have had the misfortune to commit against Thee.

1*st Point.*—Love is the most perfect satisfaction for past sins.

'Many sins are forgiven her because she hath loved much' (Luke vii. 47). These words, pronounced by our divine Lord in favour of Magdalen and all true penitents, contain within them such salutary instructions that we cannot meditate on them too much. 'Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much' (Luke vii. 47). The multitude of our offences is not then an obstacle to their pardon, if great love replace long infidelity; most certainly not. The glory of our Lord, whose dearest attributes are mercy and goodness, is to make grace yet more abound where sin abounded, thus signalizing His power and His love by His divine generosity. God is love; it is through love we must approach Him when we have had the misfortune to separate ourselves from Him by sin. Let us remark, in effect, how this sentiment, so just in itself, contains within it every disposition which can make the sinner find favour in the sight of God. Horror of sin; profound sorrow for those we have committed, with a firm resolution of making reparation for

them and avoiding them for the future, at the price of any sacrifice; lively faith; unbounded confidence: all these virtues shone forth in Magdalen. Let us imitate her, and if we love much as she did, like her, we shall receive the remission of many sins. O my God, with what ardour ought I not to embrace so sweet a means, which my numberless offences render so necessary for me! Yes, Lord, I will love Thee, but aid my weakness; give me Thy love and Thy grace, and I will love Thee with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind, and all my strength.

2nd Point.—The remission of our sins, which God grants us, ought to animate us to love Him more and more. If love be a necessary disposition to obtain the pardon of many sins, this pardon is in itself the most touching motive to lead us to love God. The fire of divine love, which commences the work of our justification, ought to increase each day and even each moment. This it is which, often having procured for us our reconciliation, ought to ensure our perseverance, by preserving within us a horror of the sin it has exiled from the soul. This it is which, drawing down on our souls still more abundant graces, ought to make us advance in the practice of all virtues. Magdalen is our model in the above. Justified by her love and the mercy of Jesus, she is inflamed with a greater love than ever for her divine Saviour; in future all her thoughts, her affections, and her actions tend only to His service and glory; she follows Him even to Calvary. After His death, she still seeks Him in the Sepulchre; and when at length He has quitted the earth to return to heaven, she consecrates the remainder of her days to the austerities of penance, and to the practice of the most sublime virtues. Let us make a review of ourselves. Has the mercy of Jesus been less conspicuous in us than in Magdalen? If our sins have not been so great, the abuse of numberless graces, which she never received, though we have, has perhaps rendered us infinitely more inexcusable. The goodness of

our Lord has nevertheless signalized itself in us as it did in her. Ought we to be less loving or less grateful? Ah, how different is our conduct from that of the Saints! My God, at length I wish to become less unworthy of Thy goodness, support me by Thy grace.

Colloquy.—The same as in the preceding contemplation, page 94.

Resolutions.—To make acts of the love of God frequently during the day. To do all our actions through a motive of love.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—Give me, O Lord, Thy love and Thy grace; these will suffice for me.

Prayer.—Receive, O Lord, etc., page 54.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FORTIETH MEDITATION.

JESUS CONFOUNDS THE MALICE OF HIS ENEMIES.

'And it came to pass on the . . . Sabbath that as He went through the corn-fields His disciples plucked the ears and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. And some of the Pharisees said to them: Why do you do that which is not lawful on the Sabbath days? . . . Also, on another Sabbath He entered into the Synagogue and taught. And there was a man whose right hand was withered. And the Scribes and Pharisees watched if He would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against Him.'—LUKE vi. 1, seq.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Figure to yourself the fields through which Jesus passed with His disciples, then the Synagogue.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant me grace, O Jesus, to put to profit the example of wisdom, patience, meekness, and firmness with which Thy conduct towards Thy enemies presents me.

1*st Point.*—The unjust animosity of the enemies of Jesus. Several times already, in meditating on the actions of Jesus, we have had occasion to remark the bad disposition of the Pharisees towards Him; to-day they accuse Him, in the person of His disciples, of having violated the Sabbath, because, pressed by hunger, they had broken off some ears of corn, and had rubbed them in their hands to eat the grain—an action which, we should note, was quite permitted by the law. We see them again observing Him maliciously, in order to pour out, even on the works of His power and goodness, the venom of calumny, with which their wicked hearts were filled. What could induce them thus to seek for apparent faults in Jesus, and to be indignant because they could not find real ones? Without doubt it was their hatred; but what was the cause of that hatred? It is important for us to examine this with the greatest care. The Pharisees were a sect of proud men, who had possessed themselves of the esteem of the public by a pompous show of fidelity to the least observances of the law; but whilst they deceived others by an external display of counterfeit virtue, their heart within was filled with ambition, selfishness, and severity; they imposed on others rigid obligations from which they exempted themselves; they enriched themselves with the substance of the widow and the orphan; they refused common necessaries to their parents in their old age, under pretence that it was enough for them to recommend them to the Lord. In a word, they were unworthy hypocrites, whose spirit was false, rigid, and arrogant, and diametrically opposed to the meek, merciful, and just spirit of Jesus. Our divine Lord had not concealed from them, on several occasions, what He thought of their ostentatious virtue; His instructions, His miracles, and still more His benefits, began to draw on Him the love and esteem of the people. The proud chiefs of the nation trembled on beholding His authority, so full of meekness, replacing their unjust tyranny. From

thence arose their bitter hatred against His divine person. Had they been just, without doubt they would have recognised in Him the Messias promised to their fathers, and yielding unto Him the sovereign power, they would have esteemed themselves happy to have ranged themselves with the people under His loving and lawful sway. But justice is at all times incompatible with ambition and pride; it could not, in consequence, find its place in the heart of the Pharisees. O, my Jesus, how fitting are these considerations to inspire me with a lively horror for these dreadful vices, and cause me to sound the remotest depths of my heart, in order to extirpate even their very least roots.

2nd Point.—The wisdom, mildness, and dignity with which Jesus confounds His enemies. Let us consider how our adorable Master repels the calumnious imputations levelled against Him. He justifies His Apostles by an example from Holy Scripture, sanctioned by His divine authority. 'Have you not read,' He said, 'what David did when himself was hungry, and they that were with him . . . . How he went into the house of God, and took and eat the bread of proposition, and gave to them that were with him, which is not lawful to eat, but only for the priests? The Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath' (Luke vi. 3, 5). When they watched Him, to see if He would cure a poor infirm man on the Sabbath day, that they might have a subject for accusation against Him, He addresses Himself to His enemies, and asks them if it be allowable to do good on that day. They remain silent. He confirms the justice of His cause by a prodigy of His infinite goodness, a wonder which costs Him only a single word, and leaves them without a pretext for criticism. It is thus that He triumphs over them, and imposes silence on them by conduct always worthy of the majesty of God and the goodness of a Saviour. Oh! had they been but less obstinate in their wilful blindness, they would have profited by the multiplied prodigies our

Lord worked in their sight to enlighten them; they would have experienced within themselves the effects of this powerful mercy; their hearts, although more dried up than the hand of the poor man Jesus had just cured, would have been restored by Him to perfect health. O, my Saviour, grant me that grace which the Pharisees rejected; grant that I also may learn how to triumph over those who may be badly disposed towards me, by an unchangeable meekness and persevering constancy in doing good, braving the unjust censures of a blind world, and acting for Thee alone.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the supreme Wisdom, Who can put to shame when He pleases, with a single word, the most inveterate malice; and as the infinite Goodness, Whom nothing can prevent doing good to those who have recourse to Him. Let us implore of Him to fill us with His Spirit, and give us to understand, His divine example. Let us renew our engagement ever to belong to so good a Master. Let us pray for those blind sinners who in these our days are too obstinate to acknowledge Him, and who persecute Him in His religion and His ministers.

Resolutions.—In order to give proof that we belong to Jesus, let us produce to-day several acts of humility and charity.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—"Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make my heart like Thine."

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FORTY-FIRST MEDITATION.

THE GENTLENESS AND GOODNESS OF JESUS.

'Jesus retired from thence, and many followed Him, and He healed them all . . . That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaias the Prophet, saying: Behold my servant Whom I have chosen, my beloved . . . I will put My Spirit upon Him . . . The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not extinguish.'—MATT. xii. 15, seq.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the sea-shore, where a great multitude had followed Jesus.

2*nd Prelude.*—Teach me, O my adorable Saviour, how to profit by filial confidence in Thy infinite goodness, and grant that I may follow Thy footsteps in the gentle path of unalterable meekness.

1*st Point.*—The amiability of Jesus invites our confidence.

We do not know sufficiently the habitual dispositions of the Sacred Heart of our good Jesus towards those who seek Him. His justice and sanctity alarm our misery, because we forget too easily that He is at the same time a God of mercy. Let us view Him in the midst of the throng of people assembled together, from all parts, to see and hear Him; the greater number of those who compose it have been attracted less by a desire of learning from Jesus the truths of salvation, than by the hope of witnessing His miracles and profiting from them: that is to say, personal interest, or the curiosity which likes to see wonders, has the greater share in their motives; undoubtedly very imperfect ones and very unworthy of our Lord; yet this kind Master contented Himself therewith, and granted these poor people all they desired of Him. If, from their interior dispositions, we pass on to their ways of acting, we do not find any greater refinement. St. Luke represents them as throwing themselves on our divine Lord to touch Him,

that they might be healed; and our good Jesus, as if the roughness and incivility of their manners had in no ways incommoded Him, healed them, instructed them with kindness in the truths of salvation, and even loved them tenderly. How can we do otherwise than confide in Jesus Christ after such touching proofs of His goodness? If He treated so kindly these uncouth men, who came only to ask temporal favours of Him, what graces will He not bestow on those who seek Him through motives of faith, love, and zeal for His glory?

2nd Point.—We ought to imitate the meekness of Jesus.

The goodness of our adorable Lord should lead us not merely to have a loving confidence in Him, but should animate us to retrace the touching example He offers us. We must learn from Jesus to bear with the weak and imperfect, and to overcome that sensitiveness which renders us exacting in points of power and esteem. We must, after His example, behold our neighbour from the most favourable point of view, closing our eyes by an indulgent charity against all that may be defective in him, loving him sincerely, and giving proofs of our love by our cordiality and kind offices in his regard. Are these traits of genuine meekness to be found in me? Am I watchful to become like unto my adorable Model by the practice of these amiable virtues?

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore His goodness, His meekness and mercy, the happy effects of which we have so often experienced. Let us lay open all the miseries of our soul before Him with an entire confidence, begging Him to make our heart like unto His, by an unchangeable meekness and universal kindness. Let us ask His pardon for the faults we have committed against these precious virtues, promising Him to make efforts to acquire them, with the help of His grace.

Resolutions.—To practise meekness, patience, and kindness towards all those with whom we live.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.
Spiritual Bouquet.—'Trust in the Lord, because He is good' (Ps. cxvii. 1).
Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.
Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FORTY-SECOND MEDITATION.

ELECTION OF THE APOSTLES.

'Jesus went out into a mountain to pray, and He passed the whole night in the prayer of God. And when day was come, He called unto Him His disciples, and He chose twelve of them, (whom also He named Apostles).'—LUKE vi. 12, 13.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.
1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the mountain where Jesus passed the night and afterwards assembled His disciples.
2*nd Prelude.*—Teach me, O my divine Lord, to seek in prayer, as Thou didst, the lights of which I have need. Grant also that I may penetrate the motives which induced Thee to choose the Apostles to labour under Thee for the establishment of Thy Church.
1*st Point.*—Why did Jesus pass the night in prayer before choosing His Apostles? 'Jesus went out into a mountain to pray, and He passed the whole night in the prayer of God' (Luke vi. 12). The choice which our divine Lord was going to make was a very important one; there was question of elevating men to the highest dignity which could be conceived; of confiding to them powers which had never been bestowed even on the angels; they were to be associated, so to speak, in the redemption of the world. Thus did our Lord prepare Himself for His choice by a long communication with His Heavenly Father, teaching us thereby that prayer is the means to which we ought to have recourse in such

serious deliberations, that we may not come to any rash determinations. In fact, if so many conduct themselves imprudently, it is because they do not reflect before they act, or, if they do, it is in a merely human manner. If I wish to be guided by the Spirit of Jesus Christ, I must not imitate these, but, like my adorable Model, I must take counsel from the Father of Lights. Am I always faithful in making use of this necessary precaution?

2nd Point.—Why did Jesus choose Apostles? Jesus chose twelve of His disciples to attach them to Himself in a more special manner, to make them sharers in His labours, and His successors in the apostolic ministry. Why did He act thus? Why did He confide such sublime functions to His creatures? Could not Jesus Christ accomplish and perfect by Himself alone the work He had commenced? Without doubt He could, but such did not enter into the views of His Providence. It was His will that not only human nature, consecrated in His own Sacred Person, should contribute to the redemption of the world, but yet more, that men, our brethren and our equals, should co-operate in the accomplishment of His designs, and should be the agents of His power and authority in our regard, the better to excite our confidence, and render the means of salvation which He offers us much more easy, as being adapted to our nature. He has not charged His angels with the care of instructing, guiding, reprehending, and absolving us; but men subject to the same miseries as ourselves, that so we may have the less cause for fear. Oh, how just it is that we should return thanks to the infinite goodness of God, and that we should put to profit His condescending kindness by loving fidelity! Am I faithful in fulfilling this twofold duty?

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore His infinite wisdom and goodness. Let us ask Him to bestow on us the gift of Christian prudence, of which He gives us such an admirable example. Let us thank Him for having given us

instructors and guides like ourselves, and for having entrusted to them divine powers for our happiness and salvation. Let us implore Him to attach us firmly, in mind and heart, to the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, and beg Him to inspire us with a great respect for, and perfect docility towards, the ministers of the Gospel.

Resolutions.—To apply ourselves to-day to the practice of recollection and to the spirit of prayer. To renew in ourselves the religious respect which we ought to have for the ministers of God's holy altars.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'With the Lord there is mercy (Ps. cxxix. 7).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FORTY-THIRD MEDITATION.

FIRST BEATITUDE—POVERTY OF SPIRIT.

'And, seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain, and when He was sat down, His disciples came unto Him. And opening His mouth, He taught them, saying: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'—MATT. v. 1—3.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1st Prelude.—Image to yourself the mountain, from the height of which Jesus instructs His disciples and the people.

2nd Prelude.—Deign, O adorable Jesus, to fill me with Thy Spirit, that I may fully comprehend the divine lessons I am about to meditate.

1st Point.—In what does poverty of spirit consist? The first beatitude is promised to three sorts of persons. First, to those who, renouncing willingly, for the love of

God, all that they possessed in the world, have vowed to follow Jesus in poverty as closely as possible. Secondly, to those who, placed by God in a state of poverty, love their condition from a principle of religion, and unite to the poverty of Jesus all the privations, humiliations, and inconveniences to which it exposes them. Thirdly, and lastly, to those who, having received from divine Providence the goods of this life, make a holy use of them by pouring them into the bosom of the poor, and are not attached to them. The first walk in the most perfect and surest way. The second hold the middle path. The third are they who run the greatest dangers, for it is difficult to regard continually the riches we possess as a deposit, of which we have to render an account; to use them as if we used them not, and to be dispossessed of them without a murmur if our Lord should so ordain; yet even they may, with the aid of grace, practise the spirit of detachment as perfectly as others; this is to be poor in spirit in the midst of riches. Whatever my condition in life may be, I ought to bless divine Providence for having placed perfection within my reach in common with all others. O, my Jesus, replenish me with Thy Holy Spirit; grant that, entering perfectly into Thy designs, I may sanctify myself in the way Thou hast marked out for me.

2nd Point.—Recompense promised to the poor in spirit. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. v. 3). Jesus says: Blessed are the poor! On the contrary, the world exclaims: Blessed are the rich! Why is this opposition? It is because the world only beholds things as they concern this present life, instead of which, Jesus Christ wishes that we should carry our thoughts beyond the short interval that we have to pass through before entering our heavenly country. Blessed are the rich, the world says, because they enjoy the pleasures and luxuries of this world. Jesus Christ says: 'Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. v. 3). All the riches of the kingdom of heaven are to be the re-

compense of a short period of privation, and this recompense is ensured with such certainty to the truly poor, that Jesus Christ does not say that the kingdom of heaven *shall be* theirs, but *is* theirs, as an assurance that the right to it is already acquired, and that they have only to enter heaven to enjoy that right. If I be alive to my true interests, how ought I not to be animated by the hope of so magnificent a recompense! But this is not the only motive which should excite me to practise the spirit of poverty according to my state in life; this virtue is one of those which draws us closer to our adorable Model, and renders us, in consequence, more fit to receive the communications of His Sacred Heart. O, my Jesus, can I neglect so powerful a means of rendering myself like unto Thee in mind and in heart? No, my Saviour, Thou dost give me at this moment the grace to understand how necessary poverty of spirit is to me; I promise Thee henceforth to embrace the practice thereof.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as our Master and Instructor, and protest that we place all our happiness and glory in listening to Him, and in obeying Him. Let us humble ourselves if it has been our misfortune sometimes to hold in esteem any of the false goods of this life. Let us beg of Jesus to fill us with His Spirit, and to bestow on us a practical understanding of His heavenly doctrine, asking him to bless the resolution which we have just made at His feet to practise poverty of spirit, according to the state in which His Providence has placed us.

Resolutions.—Often to recall to our mind that whatever we possess is only lent us by God, and that He will demand of us an account of the use we shall have made of it. To examine before God if our alms are sufficiently abundant, and if we do not uselessly expend our means.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet. — Jesus, Father of the poor, have

mercy on us. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. v. 3).

Prayer.—Receive, O Lord, etc., page 54.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FORTY-FOURTH MEDITATION.

SECOND BEATITUDE—MEEKNESS.

'Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land.'—MATT. v. 4.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—The same as in the preceding meditation, page 105.

2*nd Prelude.*—Sweetest Jesus, who dost wish Thy disciples should apply themselves to trace in their conduct Thy unalterable meekness, grant me grace to draw from this meditation the practical knowledge and love of this precious virtue.

1*st Point.*—The advantages of meekness. Meekness may be defined to be a virtue which prevents us from offending anyone, or from taking offence at anything. Its practice supposes many combats, since it excludes all bitterness, impatience, exacting conduct or touchiness; but when it is once well established in the soul the happy fruits which it produces amply indemnify us for any trouble its acquisition may have cost; it makes us endure, calmly and peacefully, the trials sent us by our Lord, as well as the faults of others, and our own miseries. Hence it maintains our soul in a perfect equanimity, which keeps far from it every obstacle to the operations of the Holy Spirit. From our interior, this precious virtue passes to our words and actions, and mingles with them a sweetness which wins all hearts and causes piety to be loved. God, who is infinitely meek, inclines towards the soul in whom He

discerns this feature of resemblance with Himself; He replenishes it with His Spirit, and dwells in the midst of it. With what zeal and ardour ought I not to apply myself to a virtue so desirable!

2nd Point.—It is from the Sacred Heart of Jesus that we must learn perfect meekness. We are born with inclinations opposed to all virtues. True Christian meekness is a virtue produced, not by a weak character, or indolent temperament, but by generous efforts to overcome nature, in order to preserve peace in the midst of contradictions and trials, and is not natural to us; but our Lord, in His infinite goodness, offers us an easy means of adorning our souls therewith. The Sacred Heart of Jesus is open to us; that divine sanctuary of all virtues is in a special manner the sanctuary of meekness, and desires nothing so much as to pour its gifts into our souls. Let us then go to this divine Heart; we are inexcusable if we remain in misery when we possess the key of a treasure, and the liberty to draw therefrom. Our treasure is the Sacred Heart of Jesus, confidence is the key thereof, and it contains all that is wanting to us. O my Saviour! Thy goodness invites me to come and receive from Thee the precious virtue of meekness. No, I will not be so ungrateful as to reject the offers of Thy love.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the divine Source of all virtues; and bless Him for having permitted us, with so much goodness, to draw near and seek these virtues in His adorable Heart. Let us ask Him for the spirit of true meekness, and promise Him to co-operate as much as it shall be in our power with His grace, by making on our part the necessary efforts to acquire this virtue.

Resolutions.—To support with meekness all trials, whether from God, from the defects of others, or from our own miseries.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Jesus meek and humble of Heart,

make my heart like Thine.' 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land' (Matt. v. 4).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FORTY-FIFTH MEDITATION.

THIRD BEATITUDE—THE ADVANTAGES OF AFFLICTIONS.

'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.'—MATT. v. 5.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 105.

2*nd Prelude.*—Give me, through Thy Holy Spirit, O my Jesus, a clear intelligence of these words, so difficult of comprehension to the greater number of Christians.

1*st Point.*—Who are they to whom the third beatitude is promised? 'Blessed are they that mourn' (Matt. v. 5). This maxim is so greatly opposed to the inclinations of nature, that the world is scandalized thereat, and rejects it. Imperfect Christians agree, on this point, in the judgments of the world; and often, even those who make open profession of piety, admit it indeed in theory, but the practice thereof is unknown to them. Let us endeavour not to be partakers of an illusion so contrary to the true spirit of Christianity, and for this end let us understand what sort of tears Jesus pronounces blessed. First, the tears of sincere repentance. Blessed are they who wash away, in bitter tears, the stains their soul has contracted; they shall be comforted by the remission of the sins which have caused them so much regret. In the second place, the third beatitude is the property of those who, afflicted in this life by pains and trials of every kind, bear their afflictions in a Christian spirit; they shall be comforted in the present time by the peace and joy which

the Holy Ghost interiorly communicates to the just, and in the next life by all the joys of Heaven. Blessed, again, are they who weep over the outrages offered to our Lord, and to the Church, their Mother; they shall be consoled in their eternal mansions by the infinite glory of God and the final triumph of His Church, which they shall witness. O, my Lord and my God! Now I understand how 'they that sow in tears shall reap in joy' (Ps. cxxv. 5), as Thy Prophet has predicted. Grant me grace to sanctify all the tears it may please Thee to cause me to shed.

2nd Point.—Jesus Christ and His Saints have passed their lives in tears and afflictions. The doctrine which Jesus Christ preaches to us has been confirmed by His example and that of all His Saints; the entire life of our adorable Model was one continued succession of crosses, privations, and sufferings. He often shed bitter tears over the outrages offered to the divine Majesty, and over the prodigious number of souls for whom He foresaw the uselessness of His Blood. Mary, His most Holy Mother, imitated Him the most perfectly, hence her immaculate Heart was pierced with seven swords of sorrow, and all sorts of afflictions so overwhelmed her with their profusion that her grief, to use a Scripture phrase, was 'great as the sea' (Lam. ii. 13). When Jesus Christ predicted to the Apostles what was in reserve for them by Providence, it was thus He spoke to them: 'You shall lament and weep, but the world shall rejoice' (John xvi. 20). The Saints of all ages have suffered in this world; I ought not then to be astonished that this land of exile should be for me, as it was for them, a valley of tears. On the contrary, if anything ought to alarm me, it should be to have nothing to suffer, since I should thereby be deprived of a right to the beatitude promised to those who weep.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the Master of truth, render the most profound homage of our heart to the sanctity of His doctrine, begging Him to penetrate our soul therewith, and bring us to renounce

entirely the spirit of the children of this world. Let us thank Jesus for all the trials He has sent us up to the present, and for the tears He has allowed us to shed, and let us ask His pardon for the rebellious feelings in which we may have indulged, in opposition to the teachings of our faith, in moments of trial. Let us promise to prove ourselves in future more worthy of the august title of His disciples, asking Him for the aid of His holy grace.

Resolutions.—To accept in a Christian spirit whatever trials our Lord may please to send us to-day. To reflect often on the tribulations of the Church, on the offences committed against God, and on our own sins.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted' (Matt. v. 5).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FORTY-SIXTH MEDITATION.

FOURTH BEATITUDE—HOLY DESIRES.

'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled.'—MATT. v. 6.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 105.

2*nd Prelude.*—Excite within my soul, O Jesus, such vehement desires of Thy love and the virtues with which Thou desirest to see me adorned, that, aspiring after Thee continually, I may attract Thee towards me, and unite myself to Thy adorable Heart, never more to be separated therefrom.

1*st Point.*—Holy desires are the sign of a soul being well with God.

The pleasures with which the world presents us, seem enticing and flattering when beheld from a distance; but on a nearer approach to them, we are not long in discover-

ing their emptiness; and the more we taste them, the greater is the disgust inspired by their poisonous source. This is not the case with the pure delights of virtue; the soul which has once tasted them wishes for them always; one step made in the way of perfection excites within us the desire of making ten; the more we advance, the more we wish to advance; an extreme hunger and thirst set in which nothing can satiate, because the more we practise virtue, the more amiable we find it; and the more attractive we find it, the more we wish to practise it. Since the service of God possesses such charms, how is it that so few apply themselves thereunto with fervour and perseverance? It is because the manna which it contains is hidden from sinners and tepid souls; holy desires come from the Spirit of God; the more intimate and habitual the presence of that Spirit is in a soul, the more ardent and constant are the affections which it excites therein. If I experience holy desires of perfection, I ought to bless our Lord and co-operate faithfully with the grace given me; if I do not experience them, I ought to labour to draw down on myself the Holy Spirit by fervent prayers and generous efforts.

2nd Point.—The advantages of holy desires. 'The spirit of wisdom,' says Solomon, 'came upon me . . . and all good things came to me together with her' (Wisdom vii. 11). The same may be said of holy desires; the soul filled therewith is in some sort all-powerful with the Sacred Heart of our Lord, Who knows not how to refuse anything to its prayers. The Angel said to Daniel: 'Because thou art a man of desires thou shalt be heard' (Dan. ix. 23). These same words are addressed to all those souls who are animated with a holy desire of heavenly things; even if they should not pray in words, their desires are that voice of the spirit which cries unceasingly, 'Abba, Father' (Gal. iv. 6). And God listens to the preparation of their heart. Let us then penetrate ourselves thoroughly with these words: 'Blessed are they

that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled' (Matt. v. 6). In this life they will draw down on themselves an abundance of heavenly treasures, which will replenish them in the sight of God with merits and virtues; but, above all, in heaven their desires, being fully accomplished, will be the cause of their tasting delights which no human understanding can conceive. My resolution is taken, O my God: I renounce all tepidity and negligence; I wish to labour unceasingly, with Thy aid, to increase within me the desires of Thy love, and of that perfection which Thou dost communicate to Thy faithful children.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the Just One by excellence, and the Author of all the sanctity of the Saints. Let us beg Him to excite within us, by the operation of His Holy Spirit, those earnest desires of sanctity so pleasing to Him, at the same time acknowledging ourselves unworthy of so great a grace through our numberless infidelities, and the voluntary languor in which we have remained too long, yet imploring it with entire confidence, in virtue of His merits.

Resolutions.—Often during the day to raise our heart to God, asking Him for that hunger and thirst after justice which He has pronounced blessed. To be faithful to grace; for fidelity strengthens holy desires within us.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled' (Matt. v. 6).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FORTY-SEVENTH MEDITATION.

FIFTH BEATITUDE—MERCY TOWARDS OTHERS.

'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.'—MATT. v. 7.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 105.

2*nd Prelude.*—O most merciful Heart of my Jesus, discover Thyself unto me, that I may learn of Thee mercy, the cherished virtue which characterizes those who are devoted to Thee.

1*st Point.*—The love of Jesus Christ and zeal for His glory ought to excite us to practise virtue towards our neighbour. If we love Jesus, our divine Saviour, we ought to wish to be pleasing in His sight and try to procure His glory, by manifesting His divine perfections to those who know them not. An infallible means of our attaining these two ends is the practice of mercy, like unto that of which He has given us, and still gives us every day, such striking examples. We shall give pleasure to the Sacred Heart of Jesus if He behold in us that kind indulgence towards our neighbour which made Him bear with so much patience the imperfections of His disciples; that tender compassion with which He was touched at the sight of the infirmities and wants of others; that unchangeable meekness towards the weak; that touching goodness towards repentant sinners, which inspired with such great confidence all those who had the happiness of approaching Him. Were these precious virtues to shine forth in our conduct, our neighbour would be drawn to the service of a Master who attracts His followers with so much amiability. Many worldlings would, perhaps, be gained from those prejudices against piety which they have imbibed through the little care of some who do not imitate in their devotion the mercy of the Sacred Heart of

Jesus. O my Saviour! I have neglected too much these means of gaining souls for Thee; aided by Thy grace, I will make use of them in future; grant me Thy powerful help; I demand this in the name of that same mercy of which Thou wishest I should be the faithful imitator.

2nd Point.—Reason and justice ought to lead us to practise mercy towards others. Though we should have no other motive of love and zeal to induce us to show mercy towards our fellow creatures, reason and justice should alone suffice to make it a bounden duty for us. In truth, it is only reasonable that we should support defects in peace, which it is not possible for us to correct; that we should use the gifts of mind and heart, as well as the temporal advantages with which our Lord has blessed us, to assist and console those who, less faveured than we are, require our help. It is just that we should support and help others; we who so often require to be supported and helped ourselves. Do not let us deceive ourselves; each one has his own miseries; and if others give us sometimes something to suffer, we on our part cause them trouble also. Let us then be filled with mercy, and imitate our Heavenly Father, who never ceases to do good to the most ungrateful and unworthy. Let us show mercy to others, that we may also obtain mercy, according to the solemn promise which has been made us by Jesus Christ.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as our infinitely merciful Saviour. Let us beg Him to open His divine Heart unto us, that we may draw thence the mercy which is so pleasing unto Him. Let us humble ourselves for the opposition to that precious virtue which we have so often shown in our conduct, and make our divine Lord all the promises our heart shall suggest, asking Him for His assistance.

Resolutions.—To bear with meekness all that others may give us to suffer, and not to allow any opportunity to escape us of rendering them a service.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Heart of Jesus, throne of mercy, make my heart like unto Thine.' Or, 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy' (Matt. v. 7).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FORTY-EIGHTH MEDITATION.

SIXTH BEATITUDE—PURITY OF HEART.

'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.'—MATT. v. 8.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 105.

2*nd Prelude.*—Sacred Heart of Jesus, infinite Source of all purity, vouchsafe to communicate Thyself unto me; Thou alone canst render me worthy of Thy divine favours.

1*st Point.*—They who possess a pure heart shall see God.

'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God' (Matt. v. 8). A clean heart is a heart which loves purity; a heart which has no affection for any voluntary fault, however trifling it may appear; a heart whose every aspiration is for God, or according to His holy Will. The special beatitude promised to such a heart is to see God. The God of infinite sanctity communicates Himself to chaste souls; He discovers to them His secrets, illuminates them with His lights, and inflames them with His love; even in this life He gives them a very clear and intimate knowledge of His divine perfections; but, above all, He prepares for them infinite happiness in the abodes of His eternal reward; there He will cause them to contemplate His divine perfections; He will discover to them the immense riches of grace, and all virtues contained in

the sacred humanity of Jesus Christ, and the sight will overwhelm them with ineffable joy. This happiness is offered me. O my God, Thou dost make easy for me its acquisition, since Thou dost bestow on me the love of that precious purity of heart to which it is attached. Ah! my ingratitude would be monstrous, if, after so many graces from Thee, I were to put any limits to my fidelity. No, it shall not be thus. I promise, with Thy aid, to aspire to purity of heart so perfect as to entitle me to the fulfilment of all Thy promises, both for time and eternity.

2nd Point.—The Sacred Heart of Jesus is the source of all purity.

It would not be possible for us to arrive at that degree of purity of heart which our Lord expects from us, if we were left to ourselves; but grace is offered to us, and the infinite riches of the Sacred Heart of Jesus are placed at our disposal. This divine Heart is purity itself; nay, is the source of all purity; formed of the pure blood of the Queen of Virgins. It is the sanctuary in which God the Father takes delight; the organ of the divine affections of the Incarnate Word; the burning incense in which the Holy Spirit concentrates His sacred flames. It is from the Sacred Heart of Jesus that His precious Blood flowed forth on Mount Calvary, to purify the world of its stains. Again, it is from His Sacred Heart that It still flows on the Altar, there to be 'the wine which engenders virgins' (Zach. ix. 37). It is in that Sacred Heart that all hearts imbibe sanctity; they go there to bathe themselves in His Blood, to purify their affections in Its sacred flames, and to penetrate themselves with His Spirit. Jesus opens His Sacred Heart as an asylum to innocent souls, as well as to repentant sinners, and to all those who wish to preserve, or to recover purity of heart. 'Come,' He says, 'My dove, My beautiful one, come and hide thyself in the clefts of the rock' (Cant. ii. 13, 14). Can I resist so loving an invitation? No; I will force myself into the adorable Heart which is laid open to me, that I may

draw from It the purest affections and the most perfect sanctity.

Colloquy with the divine Heart of Jesus.—Let us adore it—It is the sacred Source of all purity—and return It loving acts of thanksgiving for all the goodness with which It invites us to enrich ourselves with Its treasures. Let us ask of this Sacred Heart a special grace to esteem, to desire, and to obtain the sixth beatitude, exposing unto It our miseries with humility and confidence. Let us supplicate It to unite us to Itself, to purify all our heart's affections, and to fill us with Its holy love.

Resolutions.—Frequently to beg of God a lively horror for the smallest faults, and to avoid them carefully. To multiply to-day our acts of the love of God.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Heart of Jesus, purity of virgins, have mercy on us.' Or, 'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God' (Matt. v. 8).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FORTY-NINTH MEDITATION.

SEVENTH BEATITUDE—THE SPIRIT OF PEACE.

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.'—MATT. v. 9.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 105.

2*nd Prelude.*—O Jesus, divine Peace-maker, vouchsafe to diffuse within my soul the spirit of peace, which is a gift of Thy grace, and constitutes the distinctive character of Thy true disciples.

1*st Point.*—The nature and advantages of a spirit of peace.

The spirit of peace is a treasure, so precious in the eyes

of Jesus the eternal Wisdom, that He places it amidst the eight beatitudes. Let us try to understand in what it consists; what fruits it ought to produce; and what rewards may be hoped from it. The spirit of peace is the disposition of a soul sufficiently mistress of herself, or rather sufficiently united to God, to repress every emotion of impatience, bitterness, or indignation, in order to maintain herself in concord with others, however unjust and exacting they may be; it tends also to hinder differences, prevent quarrels, and reunite divisions. To acquire it great courage is necessary, for it can only be founded on that forgetfulness of self which makes us prefer the blessings of peace and the satisfaction of our neighbour to our own interests; but the advantages resulting from it are incalculable. The possessor of a peaceable spirit is a consoling Angel for all those who approach him; more than that, he may be looked upon as the Child of God, and is really such, according to the words of Jesus Christ Himself. Let us recall to mind the heroic acts of meekness and patience with which so many of the Saints have been inspired. St. Francis of Sales is an example, who, when overwhelmed with injuries by an unjust and passionate man, said to him, in a tone of the kindest charity: 'My friend, though you should deprive me of one of my eyes, I would still willingly look kindly on you with the other one.' Behold what the Spirit of Jesus can produce in the hearts which possess it! Shall I, then, not try to become possessed of it, by a constant goodwill and by assiduous prayers, and to retain its possession by a generous fidelity?

2nd Point.—The doctrine of Jesus Christ on the spirit of peace is confirmed by His example. That we may be yet more penetrated with the doctrine of our divine Master, let us seek the example thereof in His conduct, after having received the precept from His sacred Mouth. Jesus only came into this world to exercise the office of Peacemaker between God and man; for this purpose He took upon

Himself the most painful labours; He forgot the interests of His glory, His repose, and even His very life, to accomplish the grand work of that reconciliation, every advantage of which was to be ours. The detail of His actions instructs us in a still clearer manner, being capable of our imitation. He exercised towards His disciples an unwearied patience, supporting them, consoling them, and appeasing the contests which arose among them by lessons of wisdom and words full of meekness. He exercised an admirable condescension towards all who had recourse to Him. Even His enemies, with all their malice and animosity, could not make Him different in character; He even tried to spare them the confusion and rage which too full a knowledge of all His miracles would have caused them, by obliging the greater numb r of those on whom they were worked to keep them secret; He never sought to refute their calumnies, or to unmask the hypocrisy of their conduct, except when the interests of the people and His Father's glory obliged Him to it. What an admirable example! O Jesus, Thou hast good reason to say that the peacemakers shall be called Thy children and be blessed. Yes, my beatitude consists in rendering my heart like unto Thine; vouchsafe to aid me with Thy grace, and I promise Thee to neglect nothing to render myself worthy of Thee.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the Master and Model of all virtues, and beg of Him to instruct our heart in the school of His own, teaching us to draw therefrom His Spirit with His example. Let us humble ourselves for the opposition there has been up to the present between His doctrine and our conduct, and promise Him that we will endeavour henceforth to be more like unto Him, asking of Him all the grace necessary for this end.

Resolutions.—To bear in a spirit of peace all injuries and annoyances, from whatever quarter they may come. To labour to reconcile sinners with God, as well by our prayers as by all the exercises of zeal that lie within our power.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Jesus, God of peace, have mercy on us!' or, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God' (Matt. v. 9).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FIFTIETH MEDITATION.

EIGHTH BEATITUDE—PERSECUTIONS.

'Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'—MATT. v. 10.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 105.

2*nd Prelude.*—Jesus, my adorable Saviour, replenish me with the spirit of Thy true disciples, so that if Thy service should draw any contempt on me, I may rejoice, after their example, to have been found worthy to suffer affronts for love of Thee.

1*st Point.*—The eighth beatitude ought to lead us to brave human respect. 'Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake' (Matt. v. 10). These words, well understood, are full of force and unction; they have animated millions of martyrs to confess their faith at the cost of their life, and to endure the most cruel torments with a joy that astonished and converted their very executioners. They were happy, in fact, to be chosen to seal their testimony with their blood for Jesus Christ; for torments, violent, it is true, but short and passing, they ensured for themselves a reward infinite, inconceivable, and eternal. It is not given to us to follow them in their glorious career, yet we can with them have our share in the eighth beatitude, for if hell no longer arms tyrants against the Christian name, another kind of persecution is kept up against the friends of Jesus. It is that of the

world and its false wise ones, so numerous in these days, who make a point of throwing ridicule on the true servants of God, of annoying them with their contradictions, of laying snares for their innocence, and of using every means they can command to turn them from the right way, in which they have resolved to walk. Am I sufficiently strengthened against this species of attack? Have I never yielded to a cowardly human respect? O, my Jesus, bestow on me the mind and heart of a true Christian, and I will place my glory in enduring for Thy sake the contempt and persecution of a blind world, which is Thy enemy and reprobated by Thee.

2nd Point.—In what consists the happiness of those who suffer persecution for justice' sake?

Jesus, when saying that it is a happiness to be persecuted for His sake, immediately gives us the reason for this, adding that the kingdom of heaven shall be the reward of these combats. Such a reward is without doubt very fit to excite our emulation; but there is another motive still more powerful with those who love Jesus. Let us listen to our divine Saviour indicating it to His dear disciples. 'If the world hate you,' He said, 'know ye that it hath hated Me before you' (John xv. 18). 'The servant is not greater than his Master' . . . (John xv. 20). The world will persecute you because 'they have not known the Father nor Me' (John xvi. 3). He who is persecuted for Jesus Christ is thereby made like unto Him, united to His cause and His interests, and admitted to the intimacy of His Sacred Heart. Among men it is commonly said that we recognise our true friends in adversity; the most insensible cannot refuse their affection for a friend sufficiently generous to share their misfortune and its consequent contempt: what will not, then, the loving and sensitive Heart of Jesus do for those who through love shall expose themselves to the hatred of His enemies? He will enlighten them with His most pure lights, will replenish them with the fire of His love, and will implant within

them similar dispositions to those of St. John of the Cross, who asked for no other recompense for all that he had suffered than to endure still more; and to those of another of His servants, which made him say: 'Humiliation and persecution are a food relished by few persons, but they were pleasing to my divine Master, Who knows what is good . . . Why should I not love them after His example? . . . O my Saviour, how strong is Thy love, and how powerful Thy grace! . . . May it henceforth take possession of my heart: with it I shall be able to resist all the assaults which the world and hell itself may inflict upon my weakness.'

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him: He is the strength of the Martyrs, and of all those who are the victims of persecution. Let us offer Him the fidelity of so many generous souls, who have faced and still face all human foes to sustain His cause courageously, and humble ourselves if up to the present we have not imitated them. Let us promise for the future to overcome human respect with courage, asking for the grace and strength necessary for the task.

Resolutions.—If to-day any opportunity should present itself of braving human respect, not to let it escape us. To suffer in peace, and for the love of Jesus, any unjust treatment of which we may be the object.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. v. 10).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FIFTY-FIRST MEDITATION.

JESUS CONDEMNS THAT WHICH THE WORLD ESTEEMS.

'Wo to you that are rich, for you have your consolation. Wo to you that are filled, for you shall hunger. Wo to you that now laugh, for you shall mourn and weep.'—LUKE vi. 24, 25.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Still represent to yourself the mountain, on the heights of which Jesus instructs His disciples and the people.

2*nd Prelude.*—I beg of Thee, my adorable Lord, to divest me more and more of the spirit of the world, and to substitute Thy own instead, that, being penetrated with Thy doctrine, I may always conduct myself like Thy true disciple.

1*st Point.*—How greatly Jesus desires that we should possess His Spirit! Jesus so earnestly desires to see His followers conform their judgments and affections to His, that, after having instructed them in those things which will make them happy, He utters the most awful anathemas against all that is opposed to those virtues of which He has just spoken to them. Let us consider how important it is, in effect, not to limit our Christianity to mere external appearances, but to aspire to a conformity of mind and heart with Jesus, our Master and our Model. Some few outward practices of religion will not suffice to save us; it is in the depth of the heart that true and solid Christianity must be rooted, by means of principles with which we should be penetrated the more profoundly, inasmuch as the world by its example, the demons by their instigations, our own inclinations by their persuasions, tend to make us forget them, and substitute in their place those contrary maxims which people hell every day. O my Jesus, my only Master, penetrate my soul to its very centre with these maxims, and engrave them therein in indelible characters, that so their holy severity may serve as an antidote against all

vices : 'Wo to the rich' (Luke vi. 24); they are avaricious, voluptuous, and hard-hearted to the poor. 'Wo to you that are filled, for you shall hunger' (Luke vi. 25). Wo to those who give themselves up to criminal pleasures. 'Wo to you when men shall bless you' (Luke vi. 26). Wo to you when the world shall praise and extol you. Yes, wo to all these! O Jesus, how I shudder! Open to me Thy Sacred Heart; It is the holy asylum wherein I wish to shelter myself from so many maledictions, by drawing therefrom the Spirit which made so many Saints, even Thy own Spirit, my beloved Lord, Who art my Way, my Truth, and my Life.

2nd Point.—What are the means by which we can become penetrated with the Spirit of Jesus? A likeness of mind of any kind is acquired, or rather implanted within us, by our frequenting the society of persons of strong character. The more affection we have for those persons, the more frequent and intimate our relations are with them, the more easily, quickly, and solidly is their spirit communicated to us, and established within us. Thus, we behold those who frequent worldly assemblies, unless they use great precautions, take up the spirit of the world; we see a friend take up the spirit of his friend, enter into all his views, judge of things as he does, and, in a word, become like unto him in mind. If, then, we wish to be filled with the Spirit of Jesus, we ought to seek His company, His conversation, and His divine intimacy: all which is brought about by prayer, recollection, assiduous reading and meditating the Gospel, a fervent participation in the divine Eucharist, accompanied and followed by those interior dispositions which cause us to draw from this Sacrament of love all the fruits of grace which it contains. Another means, again, is to read the lives of the Saints, seeking in their sentiments and example the Spirit of Jesus Christ reduced to practice, often invoking them, and living habitually in spirit in their holy company. If we be really faithful in making use of these means, we can

scarcely fail to experience their efficacy, which is infallible. Have I up to the present used them? Am I firmly resolved to make use of them in future?

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as our Physician and only Master, and renew lovingly our protestations of an inviolable fidelity. Let us humble ourselves for the many concessions we have to reproach ourselves with as regards the spirit of this world, and for the little zeal we have had to possess ourselves of the Spirit of Jesus, asking this divine Master for all the help of which we stand in need to repair so great a disorder. Let us beg of Him to admit us, though unworthy, to His divine familiarity, and make Him all the promises our heart shall suggest.

Resolutions.—We must make these according to our wants and our affections, on the practices indicated in the second Point.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'My disciples are not of the world, as I also am not of the world' (John xvii. 16).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FIFTY-SECOND MEDITATION.

COMPARISON OF THE SALT LOSING ITS SAVOUR.

'You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is good for nothing any more than to be cast out, and to be trodden on by men.'—MATT. v. 13.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—The same as in the preceding Meditation, page 125.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant me grace, O Jesus, to understand all the force of the great lesson Thou givest me to-day, to

the end that, being faithful to the special graces which Thou hast deigned to confer upon me, I may accomplish all Thy designs in my regard.

1*st Point.*—We ought to be the salt of the earth. 'If the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?' (Matt. v. 13.) The two properties of salt are to season the things with which it is mixed, and to preserve from corruption. Jesus here uses the example of salt, to signify that those on whom He has conferred special graces ought to encourage the tepid, and aid the weak to preserve themselves from the corruption of the world. When, then, He said to His disciples, 'You are the salt of the earth' (Matt. v. 13), it is as if He said to them: You are a chosen portion of My elect, selected from amongst men to be specially penetrated with My Spirit, and gifted with My graces in such plenitude that you may be enabled to enrich others with your superabundance; and, in effect, it is My will that you should do so: it is not for yourselves alone that I have bestowed on you so many gifts. Salt is only good to communicate its strength; even so, you, if you be filled with My knowledge and My love, should make Me known and loved by others.—What a sublime vocation! It is mine also. All the graces with which our Lord has penetrated me, those in particular which draw me closer to His Sacred Heart, hinder me from doubting of this. Those desires of the glory of God which I have so often experienced, were the very voice of my Jesus, inviting me in the depth of my heart to gain souls to Him. What a misfortune for me, if, instead of tending as I ought to so noble an end, I were to become like unto those I ought to aid! Less guilty than myself, since they would not have abused so many graces, they might hope to see their languor reanimated by means of the care and zeal of those whom the Lord has constituted the salt of the earth; I should not have the same rights: destined to be that salt myself, I should lose through my own fault the gifts which were

communicated to me both for myself and others. Preserve me, O my Jesus, from such a misfortune! Grant, on the contrary, that being faithful to all Thy designs over me, I may serve Thy divine Providence in labouring unceasingly to establish Thy reign.

2nd Point.—What virtues ought we to practise in order to be the salt of the earth? Instructed regarding the great designs our Lord has over us, and moved with the desire of fulfilling them faithfully, it only remains for us to know the means by which we may carry them out. For this end let us thoroughly enlighten ourselves as to the comparison of the salt employed by our Lord. Salt is a common thing, which we use without attaching any great value to it: in like manner, our virtue, in order to be edifying and solidly useful to our neighbour, need not consist in brilliant enterprises, or in extraordinary ways of refined spirituality; it ought to be simple, modest, humble, opposed to all show or singularity; it ought to bring forth its fruits in the presence of our Lord without being remarked by creatures. Salt, as we have already observed in the first point, contains within itself a strength and incorruptibility which it communicates to everything which it penetrates; in like manner we should be so replenished with the spirit and maxims of Christianity, that, unshaken in our own principles, we should be in a condition to reassure such as may be wavering. Salt is employed indifferently for all sorts of purposes: it seasons the most delicate kinds of meats served at the table of kings, and is used also to preserve from corruption the commonest food: thus we ought to be indifferent respecting the choice of our works of zeal, and embrace as willingly such as are common and abject as we would those calculated to attract reputation and esteem. Vouchsafe, O my Jesus, to plant within me these holy dispositions. I am unworthy to receive them, but Thy goodness is infinite, and this encourages me to ask them of Thee.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him once again as our Teacher and our Master. Let us return Him thanks for the special favour He has deigned to bestow on us in making us the salt of the earth, asking of Him the graces which we need to fulfil so noble an end. Let us humble ourselves for our infidelities, and renew our good purposes.

Resolutions.—To watch over our words and actions that we may edify others. Often to lift up our heart to God during the day, asking Him to fill us with His Spirit.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'You are the salt of the earth;' or, 'If the salt lose its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?' (Matt. v. 13).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FIFTY-THIRD MEDITATION.

WE ARE THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

'You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house. So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in heaven.' —MATT. v. 14-16.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 125.

2*nd Prelude.*—Divine Jesus, Who didst deign to choose me to diffuse Thy light in the midst of those by whom I am surrounded, grant me grace to be so penetrated with the greatness of my obligations as to fulfil them to the utmost extent.

1*st Point.*—The property of light is to illuminate. 'You are the light of the world' (Matt. v. 14). Our adorable

Master has so much at heart the making us well understand the obligation under which we are of edifying all those with whom we come in contact, that He multiplies comparisons for this end. Let us endeavour to comprehend well the present one: 'You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid; neither do men light a candle to put it under a bushel' (Matt. v. 14, 15). Instructed in the school of Jesus Christ Himself, and enriched with the most precious blessings of His adorable Heart, I ought to be enlightened with Its light and inflamed with Its zeal. Now, the time has arrived when He wishes to make use of me to communicate to others the favours which I have myself received. I am in the midst of my family as a burning lamp placed on a candlestick; among persons with whom my position brings me in contact, my conduct should be as a light of life, teaching all those who know me all that religion can communicate of meekness, modesty, humility, patience, tender and cordial charity, as well as generosity, constancy, prudence, and courage to the soul which it possesses. I cannot deceive myself, the world has its eyes fixed on me; if I give it edification God will be glorified, but were I to depart from my principles in my conduct, cowardly betraying my conscience to yield to human considerations, I should become a subject of scandal to the weak, I should dishonour piety, and should I not then have reason to fear that our Lord in His wrath would extinguish within me the light I should have so unworthily abused? O my God! what a rigorous account I shall have to render to Thee at the last day! No, such a misfortune shall never be mine. I will always faithfully follow the light given me; I desire that my conduct, always worthy of the profession I make of being a Christian, shall shine in the eyes of others as a brilliant light.

2nd Point.—The example of Jesus teaches us to brave human respect. One of the most dangerous rocks to piety is the fear of those whom the light may wound, because

it condemns them. A great number of Christians are cowardly enough to deny in their conduct the truths which they acknowledge in the depth of their heart. Let us learn from Jesus, our Model, to surmount this childish fear. Our divine Saviour had resolved to return to Judea, where His life would be in danger. What! exclaimed His disciples; 'Rabbi, it is but just now that the Jews sought to stone Thee: and goest Thou thither again?' Jesus answered, 'If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world' (John xi. 8-9), that is to say, he who walks in the right way, of which our Lord is the Light, has nothing to fear, because He beholds the judgment of God alone. Elsewhere our Lord says, 'I must work the works of Him that sent Me whilst it is day. . . . As long as I am in the world I am the Light of the world' (John ix. 4, 5). Such ought to be our generosity in braving the vain judgments of a blind world that we may perfectly accomplish our duty. 'The night cometh, when no man can work' (John ix. 4). We must, then, hasten during the day of this life, which passes away so rapidly, to do the works of Him Who has sent us on this earth, and Who will soon withdraw us from it to be our only Judge. O my God! penetrate my soul with these considerations; make me ever despise the powerless hatred of the spirits of darkness, and advance from light to light until I shall be admitted to the abodes of eternal day.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the light of the world, and bless Him for having deigned to associate us with Himself in the sublime function of enlightening those who are in darkness. Let us humble ourselves if, through our cowardice or negligence, we have not diffused around us the pure light of an example eminently and solidly Christian. Let us promise to be more generous for the future, and beg renewed graces for this end.

Resolutions. — To repress any outbursts of character which may prevent our light from shining as brilliantly

as it should in the midst of our family. To show that we are true Christians in the midst of the world, notwithstanding its railleries and contradictions.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'You are the light of the world' (Matt. v. 14). Or, 'I must do the works of Him that sent Me whilst it is day' (John ix. 4).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FIFTY-FOURTH MEDITATION.

THE CHASTISEMENT OF SCANDAL AND RECOMPENSE OF ZEAL.

'He that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven. But he that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.'—MATT. v. 19.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 125.

2*nd Prelude.*—Preserve me, O my Jesus, from the misfortune of ever becoming a subject of scandal or sin to others; grant, on the contrary, that labouring with all my heart to make Thee loved and served, I may arrive, in company with all those I shall have aided, at the abode where Thy glory shall be made perfect.

1*st Point.*—It is deeply afflicting to the adorable Heart of Jesus to deter souls from His service.

'He that shall break one of these least commandments, and shall so teach men, shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. v. 19). It is causing great pain to the Sacred Heart of our divine Lord to turn from the observance of His holy law; but it is wounding Him in a much more sensible manner to draw others into the same road. Impious and bad Christians do this openly, by turning virtue into ridicule, and blaming those who

practise it. One who professes to belong to God may do the same, and even in a still more dangerous manner, by his example, if he or she be not such as others have a right to expect. The numberless graces which we have received from our Lord, and the honour conferred on us of belonging to Him, oblige us, in consequence, to a greater vigilance over ourselves. The defects of a worldly person are not noticed; it is but natural to see such a one act according to worldly principles. It is not so with a pious person, or one who passes for such. Any cause of disedification, given by such a one, causes religion to be decried, confirms the tepid in their relaxations, and becomes a stumbling-block in the way of the weak and ignorant; instead of labouring to extend the kingdom of God, such an one seconds the enterprises of Satan. What unworthiness! The Sacred Heart of Jesus honoured that soul with an especial affection, and proved this by conferring many chosen graces on it, and it wounds Him in the most sensible point. What ingratitude! Do not permit, O my God, that such conduct should ever be mine; strengthen within me, more and more, the resolution, which I now make in Thy presence, of giving edification to all around me, that so I may aid in extending Thy kingdom.

2nd Point.—Great recompenses are promised to those who shall aid others to save their souls.

'He that shall do and shall teach, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. v. 19). To understand fully the happiness and glory which the Sacred Heart of Jesus has in store for those who during their life shall have laboured in leading souls to heaven, we must understand the excess of His love and the greatness of His zeal. To procure for a soul, redeemed at the price of His adorable Blood, the means of avoiding hell and gaining heaven, is, in one sense, to do more for His loving Heart than if we had spared Him the torments of His Passion and painful death, since it is the common belief

that He would be ready, if it were necessary, to die as many times as there are souls to save; preferring their salvation a thousand times to His own life. After this, is there any reason to be astonished that He promises such magnificent rewards to those who give themselves to a work so dear to Him? Is it too much for them to hope, not alone for the recompense of the good they may actually have done, but also for the reward for all the good that may result therefrom, generation after generation, as from a first cause. No, without doubt we only wrong ourselves in limiting our views to the present time, since our ideas are so limited, and the love of Jesus is infinite, and it is His love which will guide Him in the allotment of His divine rewards. What a subject of encouragement! Yes, my Jesus, I will labour to make Thee known and loved; every motive unites in engaging me to do this, but the one which has the most power over my heart is intense gratitude; it is in occupying myself solely in gaining for Thee the souls so dear to Thee that I shall acknowledge the numberless benefits with which Thou hast ever loaded me.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as our Saviour consumed with zeal for our salvation, and as our most liberal Remunerator, Who rewards the most trifling services with infinite benefits. Let us retrace at His feet, in the bitterness of a penitent heart, the many opportunities of exercising our zeal which we have lost; perhaps even we have been the cause of many sins, for which we must now ask pardon of the loving Heart of Jesus. Let us promise Him to labour henceforth for the salvation of souls with greater zeal than ever, that we may thereby make reparation for our past omissions and give proof of our sorrow and of our love. Let us beg from our Lord the graces we shall need for this end.

Resolutions.—To determine to be very zealous and exact in acquitting ourselves of the good works we have under-

taken for others, such as instructing the poor and ignorant, praying for sinners, etc.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'He that shall do and shall teach shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. v. 19).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FIFTY-FIFTH MEDITATION.

THE PERFECTION WHICH JESUS DEMANDS OF HIS FOLLOWERS.

'Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. You have heard that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not kill; but I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment.'—MATT. v. 20, 22.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself again the foot of the mountain, where a large multitude is assembled, listening to Jesus.

2*nd Prelude.*—O Jesus, my adorable Master, grant me grace to understand fully the perfection of the charity to which Thy holy doctrine obliges Thy disciples.

1*st Point.*—The virtues of a Christian ought to be solid and pure.

'Unless your justice abound more than that of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. v. 20). The virtue of the Pharisees, as we have already meditated, was no more than exterior virtue. Their interior gave the lie, in the sight of God, to the outward show they made in the sight of men. The character of hypocrisy is too odious for there to be any fear of our imitating it; but perhaps we are not entirely free from another disposition, which contributes not a little to

render our actions defective in the sight of God. The Pharisees were guided in all they did by human considerations; they sought nothing but the esteem and praise of men; they were full of themselves, and despised others. We have to defend ourselves against these fatal propensities of pride; they are so interwoven with our nature, that if we cease for a moment to watch over ourselves, they glide into our best works, to mar them wholly, or in part, and render them unworthy of a heavenly recompense. O my God, never permit me to be deluded by such motives in the little good I do; teach me to divest myself of the secret lurkings of pride, which but too often conceal themselves therein, that so, casting them aside, I may always act before Thee with pure and upright intentions.

2*nd Point.*—The disciples of Jesus Christ ought, above all, to be distinguished by perfect charity. 'You have heard that it was said to them of old, Thou shalt not kill; but I say to you, that whosoever is angry with his brother, shall be in danger of the judgment' (Matt. v. 21, 22). The Son of God did not come upon earth to destroy the old law, but to perfect it, as He Himself has said; and to procure for mankind, weakened by original corruption, the abundant graces necessary to accomplish this end. He desires, consequently, that His disciples should surpass the children of Israel as greatly in perfection as the new law exceeded in it the Jewish law; but it is above all on the point of fraternal charity that the God Who is all love particularly insists. After having declared, that to be angry with another is a crime in His eyes, He goes so far as to say, 'If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee; leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother' (Matt. v. 23, 24); giving us hereby to understand that God will not accept the prayers or sacrifices of a heart envenomed by hatred. O my Jesus, if these precepts of union and charity be addressed to all Christians, how much more intimately do they not concern

me, the child of Thy own adorable Heart! Never permit me then, O my Saviour, to depart from them; give me a conscience so delicate that I may be ever ready to pardon all injuries, and even forestall those, by my forgiveness, who shall have offended me, that so all may recognise in me Thy child and Thy disciple.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the Master of the new and perfect law, and beg of Him to penetrate us with His holy doctrine; and above all, to inspire us with a generous and indulgent charity towards others. Let us humble ourselves for all the faults we have committed against this virtue, making reparation for them to the Sacred Heart of our divine Lord. Let us promise to labour strenuously to acquire this great virtue of charity, and implore all the graces we need for this purpose.

Resolutions.—If anyone offend us, to pardon him willingly; and if we can, to make the first overtures to a reconciliation. To act in all things with the pure intention of pleasing God alone.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'This is My commandment, that you love one another' (John xv. 12).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FIFTY-SIXTH MEDITATION.

PRECEPTS OF CHARITY TOWARDS OTHERS.

'Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given to you: good measure and pressed down and shaken together and running over. . . . You have heard that it hath been said: Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you.'—Luke vi. 37, 38; Matt. v. 43, 44.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Same as in preceding meditation, page 136.

2nd Prelude.—Replenish me, O my divine Lord, with Thy Spirit, which is all love, so that practising charity according to Thy precepts, I may deserve to receive the rewards Thou hast promised me.

1st Point.—The recompenses promised to fraternal charity.

'Forgive, and you shall be forgiven. Give, and it shall be given to you' (Luke vi. 37, 38). There is no precept in the Gospel upon which our Lord has insisted so forcibly as on that of fraternal charity: the motives which He here presents us with to animate us to its practice, are worthy of His infinite goodness. For a slight pardon granted to another who is our equal, He, our sovereign Lord, promises to forgive us all the sins we shall have committed against Him. In return for some trifling help or gift we shall have bestowed on others to aid them, He promises us nothing less than eternal goods; and, as if He feared that we should not sufficiently understand with what profusion He intends to fulfil His promise, He multiplies His modes of expression: 'Good measure,' says He, 'pressed down and shaken together and running over, shall they give into your bosom' (Luke vi. 38). This good measure is the happiness with which those will be flooded in heaven who shall have practised charity on earth: it will be so great that not only will they be wholly filled therewith, but its superabundance shall be as a torrent of delights inundating their souls, and overwhelming them in such sort that they shall be absorbed in the enjoyment of the most pure and inconceivable pleasures. Never permit, O my God, that I should be insensible to such splendid hopes; penetrate my soul, and animate it unceasingly to the practice of that true and real charity so dear to Thy Sacred Heart.

2nd Point.—How far should our charity towards our neighbour extend?

'Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you:

that you may be the children of your Father Who is in Heaven, Who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust' (Matt. v. 44, 45). This lesson, so worthy of the divine Heart of Jesus, is too clear to need development; it only remains for us to examine, in the presence of God, if we conform our conduct to it. What are our feelings if in conversation some seek unkindly to depreciate us; or if they wound us with some cutting word, or turn us into ridicule, or frustrate our projects? Again, what do we experience when we are calumniated, or our actions, otherwise innocent, are blackened? Are we ready at such times to look kindly on those who may have thus offended us, to wish them well and recommend them to God? These are little efforts which our divine Lord gives us frequent opportunities of exercising, in order to draw us to the practice of the grand precept of the love of our enemies; they serve to prepare us for more serious occasions, should they be in future reserved for us; and if our Lord should never put our fidelity to great trials, these lesser opportunities offer us matter for the same merit, if only we know how to draw advantage from them. What motive for encouragement! Jesus adds, that in conducting ourselves thus, we shall be 'the children of our Father Who is in heaven, Who maketh His sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and the unjust' (Matt. v. 45). In observing this precept then, I am certain to please my Heavenly Father. O my God, if up to the present I have had occasion to reproach myself on this important point of Thy holy law, I will observe it in future so perfectly as to render myself worthy of the rewards Thou dost offer me.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us once again render Him our homage of adoration and praise as to our divine Lawgiver. Let us ask Him to teach us Himself how to keep His holy law, and, after His example, to forgive the most unjust outrages with a heart exempt from all bitterness

and resentment. If we have sometimes allowed ourselves to take any little revenge, such as wounded self-love so easily suggests, let us humble ourselves and ask pardon of Jesus for it, promising Him to avoid the like faults in future, and begging of Him the graces of which we stand in need.

Resolutions.—To forgive promptly and from our heart all little offences. To pray for the enemies of the Church.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Forgive, and you shall be forgiven' (Luke vi. 37).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FIFTY-SEVENTH MEDITATION.

OF THE PERFECTION TO WHICH WE OUGHT TO ASPIRE.

'Be ye therefore perfect, as also your Heavenly Father is perfect.'—MATT. v. 48.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 136.

2*nd Prelude.*—O Jesus, make me clearly understand the nature and the extent of the perfection to which Thou callest me, to the end that, applying myself with all my heart to attain it, I may correspond with the designs of Thy love in my regard.

1*st Point.*—All are in some sense called to perfection. We sometimes persuade ourselves that a vocation to be perfect regards only such as are consecrated to God by the vows of religion, or at most, some few chosen souls left by divine Providence in the midst of the world, who make profession in it of very eminent piety and great austerity of life. If by the word 'perfection' is to be understood the practice of the evangelical counsels, we are right in forming such a judgment; but if by this word

we understand entire devotedness to the Will of God, that we may serve Him with all the perfection of which we are capable, in accordance with our state and the measure of grace bestowed on us, it may be said that these words of our Lord, 'Be ye perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect' (Matt. v. 48), are in truth a precept which is addressed to us all. Let us then endeavour to-day to conceive a just idea of that perfection to which all are called. It is contained entirely in three points, of which the first is to keep faithfully all the commandments of God and of the Church; the second is to practise Christian virtues, and the third to fulfil with exactitude all the duties of our state of life. To conceive at all what it is to be a Christian, these three points must be understood to be of obligation for such an one, and if we consider attentively the lives of the Saints, we shall find that they have sanctified themselves by observing these alone. The vocation, then, to be a Christian and to be a Saint is one and the same, and this vocation is ours.—O my God, grant that this consideration may penetrate to the very depth of my soul; may it replenish me with joy and animate me with great courage to aspire after and reach the perfection of my state, since it is this Thou dost demand of me.

2nd Point.—Our perfection ought always to increase even to the end of our life. 'Be ye perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect' (Matt. v. 48), says our Saviour. These words do not signify that we can ever be in a state of perfection equal to that of our Heavenly Father, but that the perfection which we may acquire by the assistance of His grace, tends to render us like unto Him. Let us stop here an instant and consider how great the dignity is to which God has raised us, and what a debt of fidelity and gratitude it imposes on us towards Him. These words, 'Be ye perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect' (Matt. v. 48), teach us also another truth. The perfection proposed to our imitation, since it is the perfection of God

Himself, we never can in consequence attain; whence it follows that we must never prescribe any limits to the efforts we should make to draw nearer to it. It is true that God has marked out for each soul a degree of perfection, but He has reserved the knowledge of it to Himself, and we ought, as long as He leaves us on earth, to strive to acquire new merits and more perfect sanctity. It is, then, true, O my God, that I ought to advance without stopping, for 'the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day' (Prov. iv. 18). Fill me, therefore, O Lord, with Thy holy grace, fortify and increase unceasingly within me the resolution I now make at Thy feet to walk with a firm step in the paths of Thy precepts, and of the perfect fulfilment of Thy divine Will, that so I may attain the degree of perfection to which by Thy goodness Thou hast called me.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him anew as the Master of the new law. Let us thank Him for the infinite wisdom with which He has placed within the reach of all the perfection which draws us to Him, and renders us worthy of enjoying eternally in heaven a happiness like unto His. Let us examine before Him, if, up to the present, we have endeavoured to our utmost to acquire this perfection. Let us search out the obstacles which have retarded its progress, examining our conduct upon these three rules: viz., the keeping God's commandments; the practice of Christian virtues; and fidelity to the duties of our state. Let us form practical resolutions upon these, begging the graces necessary to keep them.

Resolutions.—To do all our actions with a view to accomplish the Will of God, and in the manner we believe to be the most in conformity thereto.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Be ye perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect' (Matt. v. 48).

Prayer.—Receive, O Lord, etc., page 54.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FIFTY-EIGHTH MEDITATION.

ON THE CARE WE SHOULD TAKE TO CONCEAL OUR GOOD WORKS.

'Take heed that you do not your justice before men to be seen by them; otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father Who is in heaven.'—MATT. vi. 1.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 136.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant me, O Jesus, grace to understand thoroughly the dangers of vainglory, that so, being faithful in carefully shunning it, I may always act in Thy sight from the most pure motive of pleasing Thee alone.

1*st Point.*—The dangers of vainglory. We have already had occasion several times to reflect on the necessity in which we are of proposing to ourselves in all we do the pure intention of pleasing God alone; but the importance of this subject merits that we should devote an entire meditation to it. 'Take heed that you do not your justice to be seen by men,' says our Lord, 'otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father Who is in heaven' (Matt. vi. 1). Vainglory is like to those worms which find their way into the most delicate fruits; they hinder them from ripening, or spoil them if they be already ripe. In like manner, seeking for ourselves the esteem of creatures corrupts our good works, by destroying in their germ the only thing which can render them meritorious in the sight of God; for in usurping to ourselves the glory which He intended to draw from them, we commit a sacrilegious robbery, which offends Him. The demon is not ignorant of this; he knows well our tendency to self-love. Thus he never fails to attack us on that point, and, as the vice of pride is nourished in a special manner with all that is most excellent in virtue, the more graces we

may have received, and the more good works we may have practised, the more should we be on our guard. In such circumstances we are bound to use the same precautions which a traveller would make use of who, loaded with pearls and precious stones, should find himself obliged to travel through a country infested with robbers. O, my God, have I properly understood this? Have I received Thy gifts with holy fear, and have I been careful to conceal them from the eyes of men? Fill my soul, O Lord, with Thy spirit of fear and of prudence, lest, seeking for the esteem of creatures in the little good I do, I may find my hands empty when I appear before Thee to give an account of my deeds.

2nd Point.—The practice of purity of intention. A specious objection at first sight seems to present itself here. Our Lord teaches His disciples to do good in secret. 'When thou dost alms,' He says, 'let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doth . . . When thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret . . . When thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not to men to fast' (Matt. vi. 3, seq.). Now, a little while before He had said: 'Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Who is in heaven' (Matt. v. 16). Do not these words contradict one another? Not so; they teach us to keep the medium between the fear of men and the seeking their esteem; to despise alike the one and the other, desiring God alone for our Judge and the Recompenser of our works. They teach us, moreover, that if we ought to do good in public, for the edification of others, we should do still more good, in secret, to ensure for ourselves the friendship of God. O my God, bestow on me Thy Spirit of discernment, that maintaining always the line of conduct prescribed me by prudence and humility, I may neither seek nor find in my good works aught but Thy glory alone.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us offer Him our homage of adoration. Let us beg His divine light, that we may be able to discover the numberless defects which glide into our intentions. Let us humble ourselves for those we may discover, and also for those hidden from our sight. Let us renounce them and promise to watch over ourselves in order to forbid their entrance, asking for the help we stand in need of for this end.

Resolutions.—To watch over ourselves, that we may act in all things with the pure intention of pleasing God. To implore of Jesus, by frequent ejaculatory prayers, to purify more and more our hearts and our intentions.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Do all in the name and for the glory of God' (1 Cor. x. 31). 'All for the greater honour and glory of God' (St. Ignatius).

Prayer.—Pater Noster, etc.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

FIFTY-NINTH MEDITATION.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

'Thus therefore shall you pray: Our Father Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.'—MATT. vi. 9.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent again to yourself the mountain from the summit of which Jesus instructs His disciples and the people.

2*nd Prelude.*—My God and my Father, inspire me by Thy holy grace with sentiments worthy of my adoption; grant that, filled with zeal for Thy glory, I may not propose to myself in any of my actions anything but the great interest of the sanctification of Thy name.

1*st Point.*—God is our Father.

It is the Son of God become our Brother through the mystery of the Incarnation Who teaches us to call God our Father; this good Jesus desires that our prayers should be animated with filial confidence. Let us enter into His designs by meditating on all that this title of Father, given to our sovereign Lord, exacts from us of gratitude, love, confidence, and charity towards our neighbour. God is our Father; we ought then, with a holy confidence, to await the results of our prayers, if they be according to His Sacred Heart, for a good father never lets his children want what is necessary, when they make known to him needs it is in his power to satisfy. God is our Father; even our sins ought not to lessen our confidence in prayer, if we detest them, for a father forgives all to his children, from the moment they are willing to correct themselves. Jesus Christ teaches us to say: 'Our Father,' and not 'My Father.' Two reflections here present themselves; that of our union with our Father, the duties of which we ought to fulfil with a holy affection; and again, the precious advantages which this union procures for us, making us sharers in the prayers and merits of all the Saints. We add: 'Who art in heaven' (Matt. vi. 9). It is to this heavenly country, become our inheritance by the right of the divine adoption, that our good Master wishes to direct our thoughts, our desires, and our hopes, when we begin to pray. What an excess of goodness! O Sacred Heart of my Jesus! Thou it is Who hast dictated for me this prayer which I so often say; engrave it in the depth of my heart; penetrate me with the sentiments it contains, that so Thy Father, become mine also, may recognise me always for His child.

2*nd Point.*—We ought to desire the sanctification of the holy name of God our Father. The first sentiment of nature in the heart of a well-born child is the desire that his father should be known and honoured as much as he deserves; thus, this is the first desire Jesus wishes us to express towards our divine Father. 'Our Father, hallowed

be Thy name' (Matt. vi. 9). The Saints of all ages have so well entered into the intentions of Jesus Christ as to be consumed with zeal for the sanctification of the holy name of God; whether they were called upon to procure it by their prayers, like St. Teresa, or by their mortifications, like St. John of the Cross, or by their Sermons, like St. Francis Xavier and so many others, they neglected nothing to achieve an end so worthy of all their efforts. Do I imitate them as I should do? Am I anxious to procure the knowledge, love, and glorification of the holy name of God, in myself by the assiduous practice of virtue, and in others by my prayers, by my example, by good advice, and by every other means within my power? O my God, if, up to the present, I have been cold and indifferent to Thy interests, if I have not been grieved at the offences committed against Thee, if I have not rejoiced at the success of the ministers of the Gospel, is it not because my love for Thee is too weak? Have pity on me, O my Father, give me Thy love, I implore of Thee, through the merits of that divine Saviour Who has purchased for me the august and precious title of Thy child.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the Son of God. Let us thank Him for having deigned to share with us the august rights and privileges of that title. Let us beg of Him to communicate to us the sentiments of His adorable Heart towards His divine Father, and ask Him to fill us with zeal for the sanctification of His holy name, humbling ourselves for our past want of fervour in procuring His glory to the best of our power. Let us make Him such promises for the future as our heart shall suggest, asking all necessary graces of God.

Resolutions.—To acquit ourselves to-day with great care of all our religious and domestic duties, with a view of increasing within us the reverence due to the holy name of God. Not to allow any opportunity to escape us of increasing it in others by a well-regulated zeal.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Hallowed be Thy name' (Matt. vi. 9).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SIXTIETH MEDITATION.

SECOND PETITION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

'Thy kingdom come.'—MATT. vi. 10.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 146.

2*nd Prelude.*—Fill me, O my Lord, with a holy zeal for the coming of Thy reign, so that labouring earnestly to procure it on earth, I may be worthy to see and enjoy its consummation one day in heaven.

1*st Point.*—We ought to labour to extend the reign of God upon the earth. The Universe is shared by two Sovereigns: God, Who is its Creator, Redeemer, and lawful Master; and the demon, that unjust usurper, who reigns in it by sin. These two Sovereigns both desire to extend their reign more and more, but from very different motives. Our Lord, Who is essentially goodness and love, wishes to possess the hearts of men in order to make them happy. Satan, on the contrary, is only animated in his purpose by a hellish rage, which longs to ruin us eternally. The will of man, which is free, and which God does not force, places in the balance the interests of heaven and those of hell. On both sides unnumbered means are brought forward to tempt and entice. With this view, God has accomplished the great mysteries of religion; He has founded His Church, and multiplies each day both interior and exterior graces, in order to convert sinners and perfect the just. The spirits of darkness, on their side, neglect nothing to seduce and drag away souls;

for this purpose they have their own co-operators and abettors among those they have already mastered, and the latter make use of every possible means to spread sin and death everywhere. Should we be less zealous for the service of God our Father? Ought we, His children, to be less attached to His cause from a motive of duty, justice, gratitude, and love, than these wicked spirits are for that of the tyrant who has worked so much evil for them, and prepared for them nothing but torments? Never permit this, O my God! With all my heart I devote myself to Thy service; do Thou reign sovereignly within my heart, and deign to make use of me to labour for Thy glory.

2nd Point.—We ought to desire to see the reign of God in heaven.

On the earth, which is only a battlefield, the reign of God is impeded by the efforts of hell and the bad will of men; but the time of trial will pass away, and the eternal reign of God will be for ever consummated. Yet a few years, and the number of the elect will be filled up; time will be no more; then there will be no more changes, no more sins committed against God, no more souls will be torn from His service, no more persecutions waged against the Church; in fine, there will be nothing to oppose the reign of God. Jesus Christ will come upon the earth in all the splendour of His Majesty, like a glorious conqueror, and then will be verified the words of the Prophet King: 'With Thee is the principality in the day of Thy strength, in the brightness of the Saints' (Ps. cix. 4). This adorable Master, to Whom all nations have been given for an inheritance, will henceforth establish His dominion unchangeably and eternally. He will reign with His Father and the Holy Ghost, and He will cause the ways of His glory and the splendour of His Majesty to shine on each one of His elect, and make them sovereigns even with Himself . . . . O my Jesus, how glorious and consoling is this hope! How sweet to reflect upon it! When shall I behold Thee thus in Thy glory?

When shall I appear before Thy face? O my Lord, hasten the happy moment which is to bring all things to an end, and reunite me with Thee in my own country, wherein I may for ever contemplate Thy eternal reign.

Colloquy with God our Father.—Let us adore Him as the lawful Sovereign of all the universe. Let us render Him lively acts of thanksgiving for all the great mercies He has deigned to make use of in order to reign over our hearts. Let us pray for the exaltation of the holy Church, and for the conversion of sinners, and beg zeal for His glory and those holy desires of heaven which are so pleasing to Him.

Resolutions.—To offer to God to-day all our prayers and actions, with the view of procuring the coming of His reign in souls. To acquit ourselves with care and fervour of the good works which we may have the opportunity of practising.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Thy kingdom come.'

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SIXTY-FIRST MEDITATION.

THIRD PETITION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.'—MATT. vi. 10.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 146.

2*nd Prelude.*—Vouchsafe, O my God, to fill me with perfect submission, and ardent love for Thee, that so the accomplishment of Thy divine Will may be my only joy, and the rule of all my actions.

1*st Point.*—We should bow down before the Will of God with submission and confidence. Faith teaches us that nothing happens to us in this world without the command

or the permission of God; that His divine Will presides over all events, and draws advantage for the fulfilment of His designs, even from the malice of men, though this alone opposes Him. It was thus He made use of the hatred of the Pharisees, the cruelty of the executioners, and the rage of demons (not His work), to bring about the great mystery of our Redemption, in putting Jesus Christ to death. In like manner He has made use of persecutions, heresies, and schisms, in all ages, to procure for His Church the generous Martyrs and illustrious Doctors who are her glory and her crown. It is thus that every day He still makes use of the perversity of the wicked to perfect the just and enrich them with merits. All then that happens to us is guided and directed by this divine Will; it surrounds us as with a wall of defence, which no scourge, or temptation, or trial can overthrow, without the express permission of the Lord. What a powerful motive of confidence for us, if we are persuaded, as we ought to be, that this will is that of a God Who loves us, and Who knows perfectly what will be to us of the greatest advantage! Is it not just that we should adore it with loving submission, under all it may judge proper to do or to permit? Yes, O my God, I acknowledge it, I am doing Thee an injury not to look upon the misfortunes of this life as only so many means contrived by Thy divine Providence to ensure our salvation. I accept, then, all Thou mayest please to send me; teach me to bless Thee at all times and under all circumstances.

2nd Point.—We ought to accomplish the Will of God with fidelity and love. If the love we bear to God our Father obliges us to adore His holy Will in all that depends on us, it engages us yet more strongly to second His designs by consecrating our liberty to Him by an entire and lasting obedience. We deceive ourselves if we try to persuade ourselves that we possess the love of God in our hearts, when we fail to accomplish His known Will. This adorable Will is manifested to us through the precepts of

the divine law, through the duties of our state of life, through the will of those who have authority over us, through the inspirations of grace, through the different circumstances and events of life, since all are contrived for us by a Providence infinitely wise. We ought, then, to force ourselves to enter into such perfect dispositions as will keep us always ready to show forth our love for God by our obedience. These dispositions are plainly pointed out to us in the words: 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven' (Matt. vi. 10). We ought to accomplish the divine Will on earth as it is accomplished in heaven by the Angels and the Saints; that is to say, with alacrity, joy, love, and fidelity. O, my God and my Father, help me to become penetrated with these just and holy dispositions; grant that, after the example of Jesus Christ, Thy adorable Son, Thy holy Will may become my habitual food and the invariable rule of my conduct.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as our Master, and thank Him for having deigned to become our Model in practising first what He has taught us. Let us ask of Him a practical understanding of His doctrine and His example, imploring pardon for the infidelities by which we have too often rebelled against the most amiable will of our Teacher. Let us promise for the future to conform ourselves to them with loving and persevering fidelity, soliciting all the graces of which we stand in need.

Resolutions.—To renew as frequently as possible, at the commencement of each of our principal actions, the express intention of accomplishing fully in them the holy Will of God. To accept with love and submission all the trials that divine Providence may send us.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven' (Matt. vi. 10). Or else, 'My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me' (John iv. 34).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SIXTY-SECOND MEDITATION.

FOURTH PETITION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

'Give us this day our daily bread.'—MATT. vi. 11.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 146.

2*nd Prelude.*—Inspire me, O Lord, with a filial confidence in Thy infinite bounty, by giving me to understand how happy I am to have Thee for Father, and to be able, as Thy child, to recommend to Thy love all my wants, both spiritual and corporal.

1*st Point.*—By the fourth petition of the Our Father, we ask of God all that we need for the life of our soul. Our Lord teaches us to ask of God in the words, 'Give us this day our daily bread' (Matt. vi. 11), all that is necessary both for the life of our soul and for that of our body; it is as if we said to Him: Lord, Thou hast given me a soul; I ask of Thee for that soul the daily bread of Thy sanctifying grace, which I pray Thee to preserve and increase within me; the bread of Thy actual grace, of which I stand in need, in order to avoid evil and do good; the bread of Thy Sacred Word, giving it to me through the instructions I hear, and my pious readings and meditations; the bread of prayer, teaching me to make it well through the grace of Thy Holy Spirit; the bread of the holy Eucharist, granting me the favour to receive It frequently and with profit. Behold, then, what we ask for when we pronounce with attention and fervour these words: 'Give us this day our daily bread' (Matt. vi. 11). Do I reflect, every time I repeat them, on the extent and depth of their meanings? O, my dear Jesus, cause me to repeat them unceasingly in the same spirit which animated Thee when Thou didst dictate them to Thy Apostles, that so my heavenly Father, recognising me for His true child, may

receive my request kindly, and may grant me all the help needful for my weakness.

2nd Point.—By the fourth petition of the Our Father we ask of God all that is necessary for the life of our body. Our heavenly Father, whose goodness is infinite, not only desires that we should recommend to Him the wants of our soul, but also those of our body. The fourth petition then, of the prayer signifies, further: Give us, O God, Who dost deign to permit us to call Thee our Father, all the helps and temporal goods of which we stand in need to support life, and place us in a state of fulfilling with ease the duties attached to the position in which Thy Providence Itself has placed us. Let us consider how great is our happiness. He Whom we have for Father is not only a Prince and a Sovereign, but God Himself. This God, our Father, is all-powerful; He has a love for us which infinitely surpasses that of any earthly parent, and He instructs us Himself by the lips of His Son, become our eldest Brother, to recommend all our wants to Him. Let us bless His goodness, and let us understand at the same time that it would be offering Him an injury to doubt of His love and care: 'Can a woman forget her infant? . . . and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee' (Is. xlix. 15). If sometimes He seems to refuse temporal blessings to His children, on which they have reckoned, it is always from motives full of love and wisdom, to spare them the occasion of a fall, and continue for them the means of salvation; or to teach them to do on their side all that they can and should do to second and to merit the divine assistance; but He is ever a Father Who tries but for a time, and never afflicts His children except with a view to their greater advantage. Penetrate me, O my God, with these consoling truths, and grant me grace always to conform my sentiments and conduct unto them.

Colloquy with God the Father.—Let us adore Him as the Dispenser of the gifts both of nature and grace, and

thank Him for the constant and watchful care He takes of us. Let us make Him humble and loving acts of reparation for our want of confidence, restlessness, or negligence, asking Him to bestow on us the spirit of His true children. Let us promise Him fidelity, imploring His holy grace.

Resolutions.—Often during the day, to produce acts of confidence in God and of submission to His holy Will. To apply ourselves earnestly to put to profit His gifts, by fulfilling all our duties exactly.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Our Father . . . give us this day our daily bread' (Matt. vi. 11).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SIXTY-THIRD MEDITATION.

FIFTH PETITION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

'And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.'—MATT. vi. 12.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 146.

2*nd Prelude.*—O Jesus, vouchsafe to inspire me with truly Christian sentiments towards my enemies; grant that, forgiving them with all my heart for the injuries they have done me, or may yet inflict on me, I may deserve to obtain the entire remission of my many and grievous offences.

1*st Point.*—We ought to forgive others, since we need the forgiveness of God for ourselves. The Christian law is a law of love; it is not, then, surprising that Jesus insists particularly on the forgiveness of injuries, and places it before us under different views, in order to induce us from all sorts of motives to accomplish it faithfully. To-day,

He authorizes us to claim from His Heavenly Father the same indulgence that we shall have exercised towards our brethren for the love of Him. Let us, then, consider how advantageous, and even how necessary it is for us to forgive our neighbour willingly all his offences against us, we who have such frequent need of the mercy of our Lord. 'The just man,' says the Holy Spirit, 'falls seven times a day' (Proverbs xxiv. 16). How, then, must it be with him who is not just! Without doubt, we may all exclaim with St. John: 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us' (1 John i. 8). Our daily experience proves but too clearly the excess of our weakness. It would then be going entirely in opposition to our own interests, if we indulged our feelings of animosity and ill-will to such a degree as to deprive ourselves of the power of pronouncing the words: 'Forgive us, as we forgive others' (Matt. vi. 12). Never permit, O my God, that such folly should be mine; give me a forgiving heart, ever ready to forget all injuries received, and ever worthy to obtain of Thy infinite Goodness the remission of all my offences.

2nd Point.—The example of Jesus Christ and His Saints engages us to forgive others. The forgiveness of injuries is so essential to the spirit of Christianity, that everything in the religion of Jesus Christ reminds us of the necessity of this. Not only does our divine Lord teach us by the most formal precepts, the most terrible threats, and the most pressing counsels; but He joins example to words, forgiving His most cruel enemies on all occasions, and praying for His murderers, even while enduring the frightful torments they inflicted on Him. The Saints in all ages have imitated the example of their divine Master. We read that the first Christians, instead of being avenged on their persecutors and murderers, obtained for them, by their prayers, the graces of conversion and salvation. Am I faithful in following in their steps? Do I know how to render good for evil to those who injure me? If I have no

personal enemies, am I zealous in praying for the enemies of the Church, as well as for those of my relatives, friends, and country? Oh! what claims I may acquire on the mercy of our Lord, if I know how to put to profit the precious opportunities offered me of practising the forgiveness of injuries.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as our Master and Model, imploring His grace in order to conform ourselves to the desires of His Sacred Heart. If there should be within us any animosity or enmity, let us sacrifice it to Him, begging Him to forgive us our offences as we forgive all who may have offended us.

Resolutions.—To forgive promptly and willingly all offences, great and small, of which we may be the object. To pray for the enemies of the Church.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us' (Matt. vi. 12).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SIXTY-FOURTH MEDITATION.

SIXTH PETITION OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

'And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.'—MATT. vi. 13.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 146.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant me grace, O my God, to understand thoroughly my own weakness, and the great need in which I stand of Thy help to overcome temptation; vouchsafe, also, to teach me that sin is the only evil I ought to dread.

1*st Point.*—We ought to have recourse to God in temptation.

The sixth petition of the Lord's prayer offers for our consideration two very important truths. By the words, 'lead us not into temptation' (Matt vi. 13), we confess that without the help of God we are unable to resist the solicitations of the enemies of our salvation, or the inclinations of our original corruption. In effect, how could we be able of ourselves to gain such glorious victories, we, who are incapable of conceiving one single good thought meritorious of heaven? This truth is certain; but the greater number of Christians do not sufficiently understand it, and from thence proceed nearly all their falls; for, relying too much on their own strength, and neglecting to have recourse to God, they want the graces necessary to resist and conquer. The second truth, which comes before us of itself, when we say, 'lead us not into temptation,' is that which the Apostle teaches us by these words: 'God is faithful, Who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able' (1 Cor. x. 13). We cannot, without the help of God, overcome our temptations; but with His aid we can overcome them all, however severe and protracted they may be. Consoling truth, which ought to fill us at the same time with courage and confidence! Do not permit that I should meditate on it uselessly to-day, O my God! Engrave it within my heart, and grant me grace never to depart from the rules which it prescribes for my guidance.

2nd Point.—Sin is the only evil which a Christian ought to dread.

'Deliver us from evil. Amen' (Matt. vi. 13). By this last petition we pray God to deliver us from sin, and from all that can lead us into it: it is the only evil which a Christian ought to dread, since crosses and afflictions may be, and are in effect, means of salvation for all, if received with submission to the orders of Providence. Yes, suffering is a happiness for a true Christian: comparing the bitterness in it contained with the blessings which flow from it, he finds in the latter a very ample

compensation, or rather an advantage beyond all comparison. Indeed, suffering purifies the soul, shields it from the pains of purgatory, enriches it with merits, unites it to God, renders it like unto Jesus Christ, and prepares for it a magnificent recompense and immense glory in heaven. Let us enter into ourselves, and examine if, in the depth of our heart, we esteem sufferings, and support them in a Christian spirit when Providence contrives them for us. Let us, above all, examine if we fear the misfortune of displeasing God more than all other miseries. This is one of the marks by which we may know if we possess the Spirit of Jesus Christ; it is by insisting on these holy dispositions within ourselves that we shall increase within us that spirit which is the pledge of our salvation and the seal of our predestination.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as our God, our Master, our Strength, and our Salvation. Let us ask of Him a great diffidence in ourselves, and an unshaken confidence in His powerful aid, which will lead us to have recourse to Him in all our temptations . . . Let us also implore Him to furnish us with His Spirit, that so, judging of all things according to truth, we may love the Cross and hate sin. Let us humble ourselves, if up to the present time these sentiments have not been ours; and let us ask for all the graces of which we stand in need, promising to be faithful unto them.

Resolutions.—To have recourse to God with great confidence, if we should be tempted to-day. To beg for a lively horror of sin by frequent ejaculatory prayers. To avoid most carefully the smallest faults.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen' (Matt. vi. 13).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SIXTY-FIFTH MEDITATION.

MOTIVES FOR CONFIDENCE IN PRAYER.

'Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.'—MATT. vii. 7.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself an immense multitude of people assembled at the foot of the mountain, and Jesus sitting on its summit, from whence He speaks the words of salvation to all.

2*nd Prelude.*—Give me, O Lord, a right understanding of the great lesson I am about to meditate; that so praying to Thee always with earnestness and confidence, I may obtain from Thy infinite goodness all the graces necessary for my salvation.

1*st Point.*—God always hears our prayers, when they are well made.

'Ask, and you shall receive; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you' (Matt. vii. 7). It is not possible to imagine a more formal promise, or one more calculated to inspire confidence than the one which Jesus makes us in these words: 'Ask, and you shall receive' (Matt. vii. 7). A God, the Eternal Truth, engages Himself to bestow His benefits on all those who shall ask them of Him. What explanation can then be given of the spiritual indigence from which we languish? Why are we deprived of heavenly gifts, since our Jesus is their Source, and has promised not to refuse them to us? It is either because we do not ask for them, or, if we do ask, because our prayers have not the qualities requisite for being heard. Jesus wishes us not only to ask, but if we have not been heard at first, to insist by seeking assiduously the graces we solicit. He even wills that we should make use of a holy importunity, knocking at the door of His Sacred Heart, until He opens

It to us and showers down on us the precious favours of which It is the inexhaustible Source, and it afflicts Him acutely when we abandon prayer, or are wanting in fervour and confidence therein. O my Jesus! too often have I caused Thee this pain; forgive me, and henceforth I will pray to Thee with so much fervour and perseverance that Thou wilt not be able to refuse me anything.

2nd Point.—God loves, above all, to listen to prayers that have reference to our salvation.

The Sacred Heart of our good Jesus desires so earnestly to excite us to a holy confidence, that, not satisfied with the numberless promises by which He engages never to reject our prayers, He adds the most striking and touching comparisons: 'What man is there among you,' He says, 'of whom if his son shall ask bread, will he reach him a stone? Or, if he shall ask of him a fish, will he reach him a serpent? . . . If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father Who is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him' (Matt. vii. 9, seq.). What a motive for confidence! God is our Father, and He is good. But let us, above all, remark well the last words of Jesus: 'Your heavenly Father will give the good Spirit to them that ask It of Him.' This good Spirit, Who is no other than the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the adorable Trinity, is the principal Object of the promise of our Lord, and we are infallibly sure of obtaining It, if we ask It as we ought; and if we obtain It, we have a still greater certainty of being enlightened and fortified in the practice of virtue, and consequently led on to eternal salvation with facility and pleasure. O my God, I give Thee thanks for offering me such precious advantages; grant that I may ever be careful to profit by them.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us render to Him our homage of adoration, and thank Him for the promises He has deigned to make us in favour of assiduous and fervent prayer. Let us humble ourselves for the imperfections

of our prayers, begging Him to animate them in future with that spirit of fervour which may render them efficacious.

Resolutions.—To pray with more fervour and confidence. Often during the day to raise our heart to Jesus, begging of Him the true spirit of prayer.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Ask and you shall receive' (Matt. vii. 7).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SIXTY-SIXTH MEDITATION.

ON ABANDONMENT TO PROVIDENCE.

'Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat nor for your body, what you shall put on.'—MATT. vi. 25.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 161.

2*nd Prelude.*—Vouchsafe, O my God, to make me truly sensible how attentive Thy paternal and kind Providence is to our wants, that so abandoning myself to It in all my wants, I may have no other care than to please Thee in all things.

1*st Point.*—God takes care of all He has created, especially of us.

'Be not solicitous for your life, what you shall eat, nor for your body, what you shall put on. Is not the life more than the meat, and the body more than the raiment?' (Matt. vi. 25). These words contain a powerful motive of abandonment to divine Providence. It is our God Himself who addresses them to us, and, not satisfied with giving us a kind of commandment to abandon to Him the care of all that concerns us, He shows us, moreover,

that having given us our body and our life, He can with far greater facility provide for the wants of both the one and the other. Afterwards He sets before us the care He deigns to take of every creature that exists, and places before our eyes the preference He bestows on us before His other creatures. 'Behold,' says He, 'the birds of the air; for they neither sow nor do they reap, nor gather into barns; and your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not you of much more value than they?' (Matt. vi. 26). Again, He presents us with another motive for abandonment, namely, our powerlessness to change anything He has done in us. 'And which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?' (Matt. vi. 27). Jesus returns to the touching detail of the care He takes of all nature. 'Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they labour not, nor do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. And if the grass of the field, which is to-day, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, God doth so clothe, how much more you, O ye of little faith' (Matt. vi. 28, seq.). What a subject for reflection! The solicitous care of my God is every hour being lavished upon me. He makes all His creatures serve for my good, and watches over me Himself with the affection of a Father. Ah! how great is the obligation He imposes on me to-day of confiding in His Providence; ought it not then to be my favourite duty and sweetest consolation? Yes, my God! I place my happiness in abandoning myself into Thy arms, as a child sleeps on its mother's bosom, without either care or anxiety, or any mistrust whatsoever.

2nd Point.—God takes care of us, because He is our Father.

'Be not solicitous, therefore, saying, What shall we eat: or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the heathens seek. For your Father knoweth that you have need of all these things' (Matt. vi. 31, 32). How greatly are these words

calculated to fill our hearts with a heavenly balm! God is our Father, and the best of fathers. Who is the child that, seeing his father rich and powerful, feels not the assurance of wanting for nothing? . . . His hope, without doubt, would be well-founded; ours is still more so. The riches of the great ones of this world will never equal those of our heavenly Father, and His Sacred Heart is more affectionate than those of all other fathers united. Our Lord adds: 'Seek ye therefore first the kingdom of God, and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you' (Matt. vi. 33). It is not to encourage idleness in us, by freeing us from all care, that divine Providence vouchsafes to provide for our wants; but He wishes that, labouring without uneasiness to procure the necessaries of life, we make those of salvation the principal objects of our care. Jesus adds: 'Be not solicitous for to-morrow; for the morrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof' (Matt. vi. 34). The wants of to-morrow will be supplied from the treasures of our heavenly Father, by the bestowal of all necessary helps and graces, and never will God be wanting to those who confide in Him, and serve Him faithfully. Engrave, O my Jesus, these consoling truths in the depths of my heart, and never permit them to be effaced from it.

Colloquy with God the Father.—Let us adore His loving Providence, and render Him humble and fervent acts of thanksgiving for all the care He bestows on us during every instant. Let us implore of Him to imbue us with that filial confidence which honours Him, and so dispose our souls to receive His most abundant and choicest blessings.

Resolutions.—To fulfil with exactitude all the duties of our state, with a view to please God, and without any excess of uneasiness regarding the success of our temporal affairs.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Your Father knows you have need

of all these things;' or, 'Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof' (Matt. vi. 32-34).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SIXTY-SEVENTH MEDITATION.

THE PRECEPT OF CHARITY.

'Judge not, that you may not be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged. . . Why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye?'—MATT. vii. 1, seq.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 161.

2*nd Prelude.*—O my God, I know that of myself I am nothing but lies and iniquity; if Thou dost abandon me to my own weakness, I am tempted to excuse all my own faults, and to exaggerate those of others. Vouchsafe then to grant me Thy holy grace, so that, never allowing myself to judge or condemn others, I may escape Thy severe judgments at the last day.

1*st Point.*—We should judge no one, since the right to do so belongs to God alone. 'Judge not, that you may not be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged' (Matt. vii. 1). If we reflect attentively on these few words, we shall discover in them the wisdom of God, His justice, His goodness, His power, as well as that holy jealousy of His own rights, which is so worthy of His Majesty. His wisdom appears in the means which He takes, and in the motives which He sets before us, to hinder us from a fault which destroys peace and concord between brethren wherever it is to be found. His goodness seeks thus to stifle, in its commencement, every germ of division. His justice is shown forth to us in the threat which He makes to treat us as we shall have

treated others. His power likewise is exhibited, for He reminds us that if in this world He leaves us free to keep on violating His commandments, at the hour of death we shall fall into His hands. In fine, He sets before us that He alone has the right to judge, because He only has the right to demand an account from His creatures of their actions. O my God! Thy divine perfections shine forth in all Thy works and words; replenish me with the sentiments with which they ought to inspire me; grant that, admiring Thy wisdom, fearing Thy justice, loving Thy goodness, humbling myself beneath Thy power, and adoring Thy majesty, I may carefully avoid judging my neighbour, out of respect to Thy prohibition, and out of love of Thy divine will.

2nd Point.—We ought not to judge any one, since our judgments are usually false and unjust.

'Why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye?' (Matt. vii. 3). It is our vicious inclinations, the results of original sin, that lead us to judge our neighbour, and to judge him rashly. These same inclinations lead us to judge ourselves the more favourably, according as self-love blinds us. The light faults of others, above all if they be displeasing to us, appear crimes in our eyes; whilst we look on serious faults in ourselves as trifling defects . . . Here I ought to enter into myself, examine my conscience, and inform myself as to how far this vice, so common to the children of Adam, has taken root within my heart. If I possess a secret esteem for myself, accompanied with contempt for certain persons to whom I prefer myself, without acknowledging it; if I am quick in misinterpreting the actions of those who displease me; if I find others more frequently in fault than myself, I ought to fear the fatal illusion of self-love with which Jesus reproached the Jews in these words: 'Why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, and seest not the beam that is in thy own eye?' (Matt. vii. 3). O my Saviour! preserve me from such

injustice; give me an humble heart, full of contempt for myself and esteem for my neighbour, so that, turning against myself all severe judgments, I may ever interpret in good part the actions of others.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as our Master and Saviour, praying Him to penetrate our souls with His salutary instructions. Let us ask His forgiveness for all the rash judgments in which we have ever indulged, and beg of Him to strengthen us in humility and self-diffidence. Let us promise Him to neglect nothing to acquire these virtues, alone capable of preserving us from all rash judgments.

Resolutions.—If tempted to judge ill of anyone, to turn such judgment against ourselves, considering ourselves devoid of humility and charity.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Judge not, and you shall not be judged' (Matt. vii. 1).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SIXTY-EIGHTH MEDITATION.

THE WAY WHICH LEADS TO HEAVEN IS NARROW.

'Enter ye in at the narrow gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way, that leadeth to life; and few there are that find it!'—MATT. vii. 13, 14.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 161.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant me grace, O Jesus, always to follow Thee in the painful paths of Calvary, that so having walked

therein through love all the days of my life, I may arrive at heavenly happiness, which is the term thereof.

1*st Point.*—The road to salvation is painful to nature; but we must consider the end to which it leads.

Instructed from my infancy in the mysteries of our holy Faith, I have been taught that all men, being born with the guilt of the sin of Adam on their souls, are subject to all the evil propensities which are the sad consequences of that sin. I have been taught that Jesus, God made man to save us, has taught us the practice of virtues, given us the example of virtues, and merited for us the grace to acquire virtues contrary to those propensities; but in order to profit by so precious an advantage, we must labour and combat, and do violence to ourselves. These words: 'How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life!' (Matt. vii. 14), ought not then to seem strange to me. I have myself experienced numberless times how constraining and painful it is to resist one's inclinations. Far, then, from being discouraged at the narrowness of the path to salvation, I ought to animate myself with great courage, since heaven is the term thereof. I ought to look with terror on the broad and spacious road in which those walk, who, granting every indulgence to their passions, ignore the practice of Christian mortification; for the road they are in leads to hell. O my God! I thank Thee for all the graces Thou hast lavished on me to keep me from the road of perdition; have mercy on all those miserable beings who are walking therein, and preserve me from the misfortune of ever abandoning the rough but safe road, whose advantages I now so greatly appreciate.

2*nd Point.*—The way of the wicked is not exempt from pains. Grace sweetens the narrow path of the just. 'Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat' (Matt. vii. 13); but when they are engaged therein, they meet with thorns which pierce them, muddy waters which soil them, and monsters which inflict cruel wounds on them, and some-

times even devour them. Passions which flatter seem sweet at first, but as their nature is never to be satisfied, they fail not in time to exercise a tyrannical empire over the heart which has not repressed them in the beginning. This poor heart is constantly agitated by a thousand contrary movements; grief arises from privation; disgust follows pleasure; jealousy causes the happiness of others to become a torment; the heart is tortured by the cares which consume it; remorse of conscience arises, and joins itself to the rest to increase misery. This is not the fate of those who undertake to overcome themselves courageously, in order to please God and merit heaven. Their first efforts are recompensed by an abundance of grace, which procures for them a sweet refreshment in the midst of their labours, and fills them with strength to undertake still greater ones. The road in which they walk is of itself narrow and difficult, but they are upheld by the powerful hand of Jesus, and led on by His Sacred Heart. This divine Lord wisely contrives for them times of rest, when He causes them to forget all their fatigues in the sweetness of His love. Even in those times when they do not experience the holy sweetness of spiritual consolations, their soul rejoices in the possession of peace, and they are upheld by the well-founded hope of receiving heaven one day as the reward of their labours. It is then true, my God, that even in this life Thy servants are happier than the votaries of this world. Alas! why do so few understand this? It is because the greater number know Thee not, nor the sweetness of Thy yoke. Never permit, O Lord, that I should share their folly; lead me and even force me into a path which is narrow only in appearance, since the unction of Thy grace renders it so sweet and so easy to travel over.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us offer Him our homage of adoration, praise, and love. Let us beg the grace ever to understand how preferable the narrow way is to the broad road, and ask Him never to permit us to

depart therefrom. Let us pray for the many unhappy sinners who are hastening to their destruction, because they will not offer a salutary violence to themselves for a time.

Resolutions.—To combat our evil propensities with great courage, especially those which predominate the most in us.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Enter ye in at the narrow gate' (Matt. vii. 13).

Prayer.—Receive O Lord, etc., page 54.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SIXTY-NINTH MEDITATION.

LESSONS OF CHRISTIAN PRUDENCE.

'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.'—MATT. vii. 15.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 161.

2*nd Prelude.*—Fill me, O Lord, with the spirit of prudence, since the earth is covered with snares, which can only be escaped by the aid of Thy divine light.

1*st Point.*—We ought to examine well the 'fruits' of false prophets, in order to escape their seduction.

'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in the clothing of sheep, but inwardly they are ravening wolves' (Matt. vii. 15). The false prophets, against whom our Lord engages us to be on our guard, are very numerous, and we cannot take too great precautions to escape being seduced by them. Satan presents them to us under a thousand different forms, that so he may the more easily impose upon us. Books, hiding under attractive titles the venom of heresy, or plague of immorality. Persons,

whose doubtful conduct, and still more whose discourse and example, will tend to persuade us that the Gospel of Jesus Christ can be reconciled with the ways of the world; that we may at the same time fulfil the duties of religion and give ourselves up to worldly pleasures (so often criminal, and always dangerous), under the pretext of certain so-called condescensions, which we should do better to designate as human respect and love of the world. If it were given to us to know how many souls have become the unhappy victims of this kind of seduction, their number would make us shudder. O my God! how, then, am I to escape so great a danger? Thou dost Thyself point me out the means thereof, when Thou dost warn me to examine the fruits of false prophets. I ought to consider attentively whether such a young person, who is held up by the world as the accomplished model of a condescending and acknowledged piety, be submissive and respectful towards parents, or modest in dress, in conversation, and in the use made of talents, sincerely attached to faith and the duties of faith, reserved and charitable in discourse, prudent and wise in the choice of friends, in the employment of time, and in conduct when dealing with the world; keeping aloof from the spirit of this perverse world, penetrated with fear of its contagion, and horror for its reprobated pomps; in fine, if exact and persevering in the practice of all religious duties, I ought to examine the fruits of those books presented to me as calculated to recreate and instruct me, not by trying them by experience on myself, but by considering the spirit and conduct with which they inspire those who make of them their habitual perusal. O my God! I should be inexcusable, if, having within my reach these sure means of preservation, I let myself be overcome through want of reflection and vigilance. Never permit this; but grant that, aided by Thy grace, I may escape all the snares laid for me, and so glorify Thy name and ensure my salvation.

2nd Point.—We ought to examine our own fruits in order to be preserved from the illusion of a false conscience.

Our Lord, after having pointed out to us an infallible means whereby to recognise the seduction of false prophets, offers us one not less sure, by which we may know and judge ourselves, which is not of trifling importance. 'Do men,' He says, 'gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so, every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and the evil tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can an evil tree bring forth good fruit' (Matt. vii. 16, seq.). If our works be good, that is to say, if they be regulated by the divine law, by the spirit and virtues of Christianity, and by the special duties of our calling, we are a good tree; but if they be opposed to this threefold rule, we are forced to condemn ourselves. Let us be on our guard, for the matter is a serious one. 'Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be cut down and shall be cast into the fire . . . . Not everyone that saith to Me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father Who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. vii. 19, 21). I must, then, if I wish to attain salvation, attach myself to the accomplishment of the divine Will; what does It ask of me? To be humble, charitable, replenished with a spirit of faith, attentive to fulfil all my duties in the presence of our Lord, and to please Him. Yes, my God, I will be faithful on all these points—at least I will strive earnestly to be so—and abandon the rest to Thee; for I firmly believe that no soul can perish who hopes in Thee, and who uses every effort to serve Thee lovingly.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the eternal Wisdom come down from heaven to instruct all mankind; thanking Him for the salutary warnings He has deigned to give us. Let us ask Him for the spirit of prudence and discernment, in order to escape the snares laid for us

by Satan and by the world. Let us also beg of Him to preserve us from the illusions of self-love, and to grant us the grace to bear good fruit, doing always His holy Will, that so we may deserve to be admitted into the kingdom of His heavenly Father.

Resolutions.—To keep a vigilant watch over ourselves to-day, that so we may render all our works worthy of the kingdom of heaven.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit' (Matt. vii. 17). Or, 'He that doth the Will of my Father Who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven' (Matt. vii. 21).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SEVENTIETH MEDITATION.

JESUS THE AUTHOR OF OUR SANCTIFICATION.

'Everyone that heareth these My words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock.'—MATT. vii. 24.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 161.

2*nd Prelude.*—Divine Jesus, no solid virtue can be founded but on Thee alone; grant me, then, the grace to understand well the means whereby I may unite myself to Thee and attain a height of perfection which nothing may be capable of undermining.

1*st Point.*—No virtue is solid, unless Jesus Christ be the foundation thereof.

'Everyone, therefore, that heareth these My words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock. And the rain fell, and the floods

came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock. And everyone that heareth these My words and doth them not, shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall thereof' (Matt. vii. 24, seq.). Now let us endeavour to understand well the deep meaning of these words. Those who listen to the instructions of Jesus and put them in practice, that is to say, who, filled with a lively faith in His divinity, and with a sincere love for His Sacred Person, apply themselves to understand His divine lessons and conform their conduct thereunto, will be like unto the prudent man who built his house upon a rock, or rather, they will be themselves this man, replenished with wisdom from on high, since it is on Jesus, called by so just a title the corner-stone or foundation, that they will have built the edifice of their salvation and perfection. Thus established in Him Who is strength itself, they will see all the evils of this life fall on them as a storm of rain; impiety will surround them as a devastating flood; the winds of tribulation and trial will be let loose and roar around them, without their being shaken; because He on Whom they lean communicates to them His divine strength. On the contrary, the unhappy mortals who do not attach themselves to Jesus Christ, only found their hopes on shifting sand, which sooner or later will be for them the cause of the most terrible and deplorable of miseries. O my Jesus! security is to be found in Thee alone; it is, then, to Thee I ought to attach myself. I will do it joyfully, for Thou art the only object worthy of my love. But at the same time, O my Saviour, penetrated with compassion for those who go astray from Thee, I will not cease to petition for them the grace of conversion.

2nd Point.—In what way ought we to found on Jesus Christ the edifice of our perfection?

'He who hears My words, and puts them in practice, is like unto a wise man who builds upon a rock,' that is, on Jesus Christ Himself. But what do we understand by founding on Him the edifice of our perfection? It is of the greatest importance that we should comprehend this well: it is to apply ourselves to the accomplishment of our duties, and to the practice of virtue, not according to our own views, which are guided by a spirit of confidence in our own lights, of attachment to our own judgment—a spirit of caprice and inconstancy, of presumption and self-complacency, appropriating to self even the good we do; but according to the spirit of Jesus Christ, which is a spirit of humility, meekness, and forgetfulness of self—a spirit of holy diffidence, founded on the persuasion as to what we really are in our ignorance and weakness—a spirit of filial confidence in God, founded on faith and sustained by love—a spirit of kindness and peace towards our neighbour, whom we love for God's sake. To found on Jesus Christ the edifice of our perfection is to give our heart to Him, to clothe ourselves with Him, to identify ourselves with Him, so that His merits may compensate in the eyes of His Father for our profound misery, and His virtues take the place of our vices. To found on Jesus Christ the edifice of our sanctification, is to hope for all things through Jesus Christ, and to do every action through and with Jesus Christ. I return Thee thanks, O my good Master, in that Thou hast placed me in the happy necessity of seeking sanctity but in Thee alone. Open to me Thy Sacred Heart, show me Its charms; unite me to It for ever, and grant that I may draw from thence strength and every other grace necessary to enable me to raise the spiritual edifice of my sanctification.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the only foundation of true virtue, thanking Him for the instructions He has given us, all which tend to draw us to Himself. Let us beg of Him never to permit us to build the structure of our sanctification on sand, but on Himself

alone; and implore of Him to enlighten us, that so we may labour efficaciously at so great a work.

Resolutions.—To do all our actions in union with Jesus, imitating Him in them as perfectly as possible.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—Sacred Heart of Jesus, sweet support of all Thy adorers, have mercy on us. Or, My soul is firmly upheld, because it is supported by Jesus Christ.

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SEVENTY-FIRST CONTEMPLATION.

THE LEPER HEALED.

1*st Prelude.*—'And when Jesus was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him; and behold a leper came and adored Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, stretching forth His hand, touched him, saying, I will; be thou made clean. And forthwith his leprosy was cleansed' (Matt. viii. 1, seq.).

2*nd Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the foot of the mountain where Jesus has just come down, followed by an immense concourse of people.

3*rd Prelude.*—Grant me grace, O Jesus, to draw from this contemplation the faith and constancy so necessary for me; that so my prayers may be answered, as those of the leper were, whose cure I am about to meditate.

1*st Point.*—Consider the persons. Jesus, our adorable Master. He has just come from instructing the multitude during several hours; but the fatigue that inevitably results from a long discourse has diminished nothing of His affability, His patience, or His unwearied kindness . . The crowd which presses around Him is filled with admiration for what it has just heard . . . A leper presents

himself: he is fearfully disfigured by his hideous malady; his humble comportment inspires pity.

2nd Point.—Listen to the words. 'Lord,' exclaims the leper, 'if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean' (Matt. viii. 2). What faith and confidence are contained in these few words! Not a doubt arises in his mind as to the infinite power of Jesus: 'If Thou wilt, Thou canst,' and at the same time he trusts that the compassionate Heart of Him he is invoking will not refuse to grant the favour implored. When we beg for the cure of some spiritual infirmity, do our dispositions resemble those of this leper? 'Jesus . . . touched him, saying: I will; be thou made clean' (Matt. viii. 3). O powerful words of infinite sweetness! O Jesus, deign to pronounce them for me. Thou knowest the many different infirmities under which my soul is suffering: behold it covered with the leprosy of sin and corruption; if Thou wilt, Thou canst cure me; I recommend all my wants and miseries to Thy Sacred Heart. Our divine Master adds: 'See thou tell no man, but go, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses commanded for a testimony unto them' (Matt. viii. 4). It is out of humility Jesus wishes to conceal from the people the knowledge of this new miracle; but the leper, penetrated with gratitude and transported with joy, being gone out, began to publish aloud and proclaim abroad the wonder which had just been worked upon him (Mark i. 45).

3rd Point.—Consider the actions. The marks of veneration shown by the leper, who falls on his knees before Jesus and adores Him. The short but perfect prayer which he addresses to Him. The miracle worked by Jesus, Who makes use only of a simple word. The prohibition given by our Lord to publish the miracle. The command He gives the leper to go and show himself to the priests. The obedience of the former, and, above all, his gratitude, which will not let him remain silent.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the all-powerful God Who commands health and sickness at His

pleasure, and is a Lord full of sweetness, Who deigns to compassionate our miseries and relieve them. Let us thank Him for the many special graces which have caused us to experience His power and His love; and let us lay before Him with confidence the maladies of our soul, praying Him to have pity on us and cure us.

Resolutions.—To endeavour to increase within us the lively faith and filial confidence which ought to accompany all our prayers. To raise our heart to Jesus frequently during the day, begging of Him to heal our soul.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean' (Matt. viii. 2).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SEVENTY-SECOND MEDITATION.

JESUS JOINS PRAYER TO LABOUR.

'The fame of Him went abroad the more, and great multitudes came together to hear Him, and to be healed by Him of their infirmities. And He retired into the desert to pray.'—LUKE v. 15, 16.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Let us transport ourselves in spirit into the solitary places where Jesus went to pray; they are free from interruption. Let us figure to ourselves the calm of a beautiful night, and behold our adorable Master reposing His divine soul in peaceful prayer.

2*nd Prelude.*—O, my loving Saviour, teach me that it is in prayer I ought, after Thy example, to seek for spiritual rest and refreshment; and in Thy infinite goodness grant me grace to do so with benefit to my soul.

1*st Point.*—Jesus divides His time between prayer and work.

'Multitudes came together to hear Jesus, and to be healed of their infirmities; and He retired' (from time to time) 'into the desert and prayed' (Luke v. 15, 16). The profound wisdom of our divine Lord offers us here a very important lesson; it would appear to us, judging in accordance with our scanty light, that His zeal should have led Him to profit by the eagerness of the people by not depriving them of one of those precious moments they would spend with Him; but Jesus gives us all a perfect model of the conduct we ought to follow. He would teach us that the soul as well as the body needs to recruit its strength from time to time, and that in the same way as the most robust health fails not to give way, if to painful labour be added the privation of rest and food; in like manner the strongest virtue will not long be able to sustain the labours of zeal, which do not allow the soul leisure to rest and reanimate itself by frequent communications with God. Am I thoroughly convinced of this truth? Do I look on my spiritual exercises as indispensably necessary for maintaining my soul in good order? When necessity forces me to omit any spiritual duty, am I careful to repair the loss as soon as possible? O my Jesus, communicate to me a share of Thy divine prudence, and never permit me to neglect the means which alone can sustain my weakness and insure for me Thy succour.

2*nd Point.*—Jesus knew how to pray, even in the midst of labour. Jesus, our divine Model, did not content Himself with consecrating to prayer the time which He stole from the labours of His mission or from sleep. He knew how to make His prayer continual by a spirit of recollection, by the union of His Sacred Heart with His divine Father, by the purity of His motives, and by the perpetual exercise of perfect charity. If He desires to be imitated in the care wherewith He prayed, He wishes also to be so in the practice of the spirit of prayer. I ought in consequence to

perform all my actions in the presence of our Lord; and with the intention of pleasing Him, I ought to be careful to recall to my mind and heart as often as I can the loving remembrance of His presence, endeavouring to acquire a holy habit of speaking to Him interiorly, of consulting Him in my doubts, of having recourse to Him in my wants, of listening to Him speaking to me interiorly, and of being faithful to His voice. O my Jesus! a spirit of prayer is the distinctive characteristic of Thy true followers. I acknowledge with shame that up to the present I have made very little progress in this; but vouchsafe to help me by Thy holy grace, and in future I will apply myself with earnestness to the task.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the Master and Model of interior life, and beg of Him the spirit of recollection and prayer. Let us acknowledge that, if up to the present we do not possess it, the fault is to be attributed alone to our want of correspondence to grace. Let us promise to be more faithful in future.

Resolutions—To apply ourselves especially to-day to the practice of recollection and prayer.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'I will hear what the Lord God will speak in me' (Ps. lxxxiv. 9).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SEVENTY-THIRD MEDITATION.

PRAYER OF THE CENTURION

'And when Jesus had entered into Capharnaum, there came to Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying, 'Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented. And Jesus saith to Him, I will come and heal him. And the centurion, making answer, said, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof: but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed.'—MATT. viii. 5, 6, 7, 8.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself the city of Capharnaum, which Jesus has just entered.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant, O my divine Lord, that I may put to profit with fidelity all the practical lessons of faith, humility, charity, and holy confidence contained in the beautiful subject on which I am about to meditate.

1*st Point.*—What are the virtues practised by the centurion in the request which he makes to Jesus?

'There came to Jesus a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, and is grievously tormented' (Matt. viii. 5, 6). The charity of this man is the first virtue that presents itself to our reflections; it is not for a parent or a benefactor, or even for a friend, that he comes to solicit the goodness of Jesus; it is for his servant, on whom he has already lavished his care, which not only the words he uses gives us to understand, but still more the step he now takes; the expressions he makes use of show how full of compassion his heart is: 'Lord, my servant is sick of a palsy, and is grievously tormented' (Matt. viii. 6). Such a request could not be rejected by the loving Heart of His divine Master, Who answers without delay: 'I will come and heal him.' 'Lord,' replies the centurion, 'I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof: but

only say the word, and my servant shall be healed' (Matt. viii. 7, 8). These words are animated by the most sincere humility and the most lively faith; in consequence they obtain the favour demanded. Let us here look into ourselves and interrogate our heart. Does Jesus always find in us, His children and His followers, dispositions like unto those of the centurion, who scarcely knows Him? What a subject of shame for me, O my Jesus, to find myself always so different to what I ought to be. Ah! at least, if I am devoid of virtue, grant me grace to be thoroughly penetrated with my unworthiness, that so a sentiment of justice on my part may engage Thee to have pity on Thy poor creature.

2nd Point.—What are the favours by which Jesus rewards the virtues of the centurion? Every page of the sacred writings manifests to us the kindness of the Sacred Heart of our divine Lord; everywhere we find Him gentle, charitable, full of compassion for sinners and the sick; ever ready to reward the faith and fidelity of those who have recourse to Him. Let us consider with what kindness He receives the centurion in the Gospel; at his first word He replies: 'I will come and heal him' (Matt. viii. 7). And when the man, penetrated with the twofold sentiment of the power of Jesus and of his own unworthiness, continues: 'Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof; say only the word' (Matt. viii. 8), not only does our good Master work in his favour one of His greatest miracles, but He also bestows on him praises accompanied with abundant graces, which penetrate His soul and perfect therein the virtues of which He has just produced the acts. Oh, if we only knew how much Jesus desires to find the opportunity of enriching us with His gifts, how attentive His Sacred Heart is to every act of virtue we perform, how sweet it is to Him to recompense us for them, we should be filled with a holy ardour for the practice of virtue. Grant me then, O Jesus, to know Thy Sacred Heart, that, using every effort to be

pleasing thereto, I may draw down on myself Thy favours and choicest benedictions.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as our God and Saviour, Whose goodness equals His power. Let us thank Him for having permitted the holy Gospel to transmit to us the history of so many examples likely to edify us. Let us humble ourselves for the little resemblance we bear to the great models proposed to us; begging of Jesus to supply for our great indigence by placing in our soul all the virtues with which He desires to see it adorned, and, above all, to implant within it a sincere self-contempt, and great confidence in His power and goodness.

Resolutions.—To enter into ourselves frequently during the day, humbling ourselves in the presence of God. To profit carefully by the opportunities which present themselves of practising charity towards our neighbour.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Say only the word, and my soul shall be healed' (Matt. viii. 8).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SEVENTY-FOURTH CONTEMPLATION.

THE RAISING TO LIFE OF THE WIDOW'S SON AT NAIM.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—'And it came to pass that Jesus went into a city called Naim . . . and when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold a dead man was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. . . Whom when the Lord had seen, being moved with mercy towards her, He said to her, Weep not; and He came near and touched the bier, and they that carried it stood still. And

He said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up and began to speak' (Luke vii. 11-15).

2nd Prelude.—Represent to yourself a funeral procession at the gates of Naim, and a disconsolate mother. Jesus approaches her, accompanied by His disciples.

3rd Prelude.—Divine Jesus, grant me an intimate knowledge of the goodness of Thy Sacred Heart, and deign to inspire me with the love and confidence I ought to have for Thee.

1st Point.—Consider the persons. Jesus, our adorable Saviour, full of kindness; let us imagine how replenished with majesty, and at the same time how amiable He looks . . . then penetrate into His Sacred Heart. Of what is He thinking? Of doing good to others . . . His Apostles are with Him . . . Let us also take notice that a dead man is being carried out to be buried . . . he is a young man . . . had he been a good man or a sinner? The Gospel does not tell us; he was dead . . . Let us behold the very great number of persons who are rendering him the last sad honours . . . some are afflicted, others insensible. The mother of the deceased is there . . . she is a widow . . . she is weeping bitterly . . . Jesus sees her, and His divine Heart is moved with compassion.

2nd and 3rd Points.—Listen to the words and consider the actions . . . Let us imagine that we hear the wailings and sobs of the multitude, which thus expresses its grief according to the custom of the Jews . . . Our Lord draws near to the desolate widow and says to her kindly: 'Weep not' . . . (Luke vii. 13). What must have been the feelings of the poor mother at this moment? . . . Perhaps she had heard of the miracles of Jesus Christ . . . if she did not know Him, it was sufficient to see Him to be struck with the impression of divinity which surrounded His Sacred Person, and inspired all who beheld Him with respect and love, provided they themselves were exempt from bad passions . . . Oh! how His Sacred Heart invited to tender confidence . . . Jesus came near and

touched the bier, and they that carried it stood still: what silence of wonderment! the multitude is in expectation. Our Lord speaks to the deceased with divine authority: 'Young man, I say to thee, Arise' . . (Luke vii. 12). At the same moment the dead man sat up and began to speak . . . and Jesus gave him to his mother . . In contemplating all these wonders, let us open our heart to the impressions of the Holy Spirit, praying this divine Spirit to make known to us the infinite goodness of the Sacred Heart of our divine Lord. If His Heart was so moved with compassion at the tears of this poor mother, as the holy Gospel remarks, how will He be insensible to our tears? If He works a miracle in her favour, which she had not thought of demanding, will He reject the prayers we address to Him, when they have for their end His glory and our own dearest interests? . . No; Jesus Christ never changes; He is always infinite power and goodness itself; let us then abandon ourselves to all the sentiments of love, confidence, and abandonment with which we ought to be penetrated.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the Word made flesh, filled with tenderness and compassion for our miseries. Let us thank Him for having deigned to provide Himself with a heart like unto ours, in order to make it the fountain of His immense love, and thereby manifest the sentiments with which It is penetrated for us. Let us beg of this God of goodness to teach us to know Him, and to cure us of all diffidence in Him, asking His pardon for having ever thereby grieved His Sacred Heart, for if the heart of a father is wounded by want of confidence in his child, the sensitive heart of Jesus is still more so. Let us speak to Him earnestly of our spiritual wants, and also of those in whom we take an interest, asking Him with confidence for a cure, and even, if it be necessary, for the resurrection of our soul and theirs. Jesus is the Author of life, and nothing is too great for His power.

Resolutions.—To go to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in all

our trials, difficulties, and temptations, and even in our falls, with great confidence founded on His infinite goodness.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—Sacred Heart of Jesus, salvation of those who hope in Thee, have mercy on us!

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SEVENTY-FIFTH MEDITATION.

THE SIGNS OF THE MESSIAS SENT TO MEN.

'Now when John had heard in prison the works of Christ, sending two of his disciples, he said to Him: Art thou He that art to come, or look we for another? And Jesus, making answer, said to them: Go, and relate to John what you have heard and seen. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them.'—MATT. xi. 2-5.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1st Prelude.—Represent to yourself our Lord surrounded by a great multitude of the poor, sick, and infirm, who follow Him to hear His holy lessons, or obtain some favour from Him. Imagine also you see the two disciples sent by St. John the Baptist.

2nd Prelude.—Grant me grace, O my God, to know well the characters of the Messias Thou hast sent us, that so I may unite myself to Him in gratitude and love.

1st Point.—The marks and benefits of Jesus Christ our divine Messias. 'Go, and relate to John what you have seen and heard; the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise again, the poor have the Gospel preached to them' (Matt. xi. 4, 5). The mystery of the redemption of the world wrought by the

Word Incarnate is the mystery of the love and infinite mercy of God towards His creatures; it was in consequence suitable that the divine Wisdom should manifest to men their Saviour by signs which were in accordance with His character and His mission. Let us apply ourselves to consider these. These signs are works of power: He Who operates them is truly the Son of God. They are works of goodness and mercy: this Son of God came down from Heaven upon this earth only to exercise mercy. We know not sufficiently the ministry of Jesus Christ in our regard; we do not sufficiently appreciate the greatness of His benefits; let us pray to Him to enlighten our soul on this mystery, and to animate us to gratitude. Before His coming men were blind: the Prophets represent them to us as 'sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death' (Isaias ix. 2); they were lame, being unable to drag themselves along in the way of salvation without great difficulty; the leprosy of sin rendered them objects of horror in the eyes of God and of His Angels; they were deaf to the voice of conscience, and even of reason, paying divine honours to idols worthy only of their contempt; in fine, they were dead to the grace of God, and condemned to eternal death. Jesus Christ remedied all these evils; the exterior miracles which He worked in individuals were the figures and signification of those infinitely more excellent ones which His grace operated in favour of all mankind; for this reason He replied to those who asked Him if He were the Messias: the blind see, the lame walk, etc. This answer contains all; let us meditate thereon, and render to our Lord all the homage of adoration, love, and gratitude so justly His due.

2nd Point.—What duties do the benefits of Jesus Christ our divine Messias impose upon us?

The Son of God came down from heaven to save us, clothed Himself with our nature in order to gain our heart by His infinite goodness; to remedy our miseries by the merits of His life and death; in fine, to offer us in His

adorable Person a model we ought to imitate. We require these things in order to enter into His views, and receive from Him the benefits which He brought us from heaven. The first is to open our heart to the impressions of His holy love; to consider carefully when we meditate on these mysteries everything that shows how amiable He is, so that the fire of divine love may light up within us and inflame our soul. In the second place, we must desire and ask by prayers, full of confidence and ardour, that His merits may be applied to us for the cure, the sanctification, and salvation of our soul. In fine, we must meditate on His example, that so we may conform by the assistance of His grace our sentiments, our dispositions, and our conduct thereto. Oh! how happy should we be if we knew, and loved and imitated Jesus Christ perfectly! Let us endeavour to conceive an earnest desire thereof, or rather let us ask this desire of the Holy Spirit, Who alone can form it within us. Let us also address ourselves to our adorable Saviour, saying to Him: Lord, I firmly believe Thou art He that is to come, and we are not to expect another, since all the promises have been fulfilled in Thee; be Thou, then, my Saviour, my Redeemer, my hope, my salvation, my happiness, and my life, the one only object of my love and my eternal recompense.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the true Son of God, the Messias promised to our Fathers, and our divine Redeemer, giving vent at His sacred feet the most fervent acts of faith, hope, love, gratitude and praise, of which our heart shall be capable. Let us beg of Him to replenish us with the sacred fire which He came to cast on earth, apply to us all the fruits of His divine merits, and to bestow on us the understanding and grace necessary to imitate Him. Let us beg His forgiveness for our past ingratitude, and consecrate ourselves entirely to Him.

Resolutions.—To open our heart to the grace of Jesus Christ by frequent aspirations. To combat our predominant passion, in order to put ourselves in a state to

receive the plenitude of the precious fruits of His coming.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—Lord Jesus, 'I believe that Thou art Christ the Son of the living God' (Matt. xvi. 16).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SEVENTY-SIXTH MEDITATION.

PRUDENCE AND COURAGE ARE NECESSARY TO BE SAVED.

'And blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me . . . The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away.'—MATT. xi. 6-12.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Again figure to yourself a public place where our Lord is speaking to the multitude, and let us listen ourselves with the greatest respect to His Sacred Words.

2*nd Prelude.*—O my God, I beg of Thee to penetrate my soul with a humble diffidence of myself, and to render my faith lively, that so I may surmount with courage all the obstacles which oppose my salvation.

1*st Point.*—The doctrine and example of Jesus Christ are entirely opposed to the inclinations of corrupt nature.

The Son of God, touched with the dreadful ravages which the sin of our first Parents had caused in our nature, deigned to become man in order to raise man from his fall and establish him in a still higher dignity than even that of his original innocence. He came on earth, accordingly, offering to us the example of every virtue opposed to our vices, teaching us a most pure doctrine, calculated to cure the blindness of our mind, and offering us His grace to enable us to surmount our corrupt inclina-

tions; but the greater number of men, become hardened to His voice, are willingly blind, and make of Jesus an occasion of scandal, thus turning the infinite benefit presented to them, and which they reject, into a subject-matter of a more severe condemnation and deeper fall. It is this Jesus Christ gives us to understand in these words: 'Blessed is he that shall not be scandalized in Me' (Matt. xi. 6). Here let us enter into ourselves, and beg of our God to penetrate us with His divine light, which is alone capable of enlightening us on our real dispositions; let us entreat Him to show us if there be not some point in the teaching or example of Jesus Christ which our heart refuses to admit, because it combats some cherished passion which we refuse to sacrifice; let us look into the most secret foldings of our conscience, and if we there discover anything which hinders us from belonging entirely to Jesus, let us hasten, with the help of His grace, to apply a prompt remedy, for the smallest wanderings may lead to great sins, as soon as we begin to depart from Jesus.

2nd Point.—The doctrine and example of Jesus Christ oblige us to combat and to conquer all the inclinations of corrupt nature.

'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent bear it away' (Matt. xi. 12). If man had persevered in the state of innocence, far from encountering difficulties and trials in the practice of his duties, he would have fulfilled with joy and facility the will of his Creator; but sin entered into the world, and since that moment the aspect of things has changed; the nature of the unhappy children of Adam has become subject to a thousand vicious inclinations, which are like thorns in the practice of virtue; and to attain salvation, they are compelled to wage a constant war against self. The eternal truth has itself pronounced that 'the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence' (Matt. xi. 12). We must then be resolved to labour and suffer, and to regard this life as the period of trial destined for the combat. Thus have the

Saints looked upon it, and it is only by a magnanimous courage and unshaken confidence in the protection of God, that they have surmounted obstacles. The same means are offered to us; let us beg of our Lord to teach us to make use of them, since with their help we are certain of attaining eternal salvation; let us behold our divine Lord and all the Saints who have gone before us in the narrow way; ought we to be afraid to follow them? They have conquered; if we imitate their combats, we shall share their triumph.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us offer Him, together with the most profound respect and lively gratitude, our tribute of adoration and praise. Let us endeavour by our fervent homage to indemnify Him for the ingratitude of those who, instead of profiting by His coming, have made of Him a subject of scandal. Let us beg of Him to make us understand, by the vivid light of His grace, the necessity in which we are of resisting our passions, that we may work out our salvation. Let us also ask Him for His aid, without which we can do nothing, imploring His pardon for our past negligences, and promising Him to serve Him henceforth with courage and generosity.

Resolutions.—To apply ourselves with courage to overcome our predominant fault.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence' (Matt. xi. 12). Heaven will be the reward of our combats.

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SEVENTY-SEVENTH MEDITATION.

JESUS REBUKES THE BLASPHEMY OF THE PHARISEES.

'Then was offered to Him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb; and He healed him, so that he spoke and saw. And all the multitudes were amazed, and said: Is not this the son of David? But the Pharisees, hearing it, said: This man casteth not out devils but by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said to them: Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if satan cast out satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?'—MATT. xii. 22-26.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself an extensive country, in the midst of which is Jesus, accompanied by His Apostles, and surrounded by an immense multitude of people.

2*nd Prelude.*—O my Jesus, I beg of Thee to draw together more and more closely, by Thy grace, the sacred bonds which unite me to Thee, and to give me a right understanding of Thy adorable lessons. Penetrate me, O my Saviour, with Thy Spirit and Thy doctrine. Thou hast the words of eternal life.

1*st Point.*—Jesus confounds the malice of His enemies. Jesus had just delivered a possessed person, and those who had witnessed the miracle were in admiration thereat, when the Pharisees dared to conceive a horrible blasphemy, attributing to the infernal spirits the wonders of His power: 'It is by Beelzebub,' said they within themselves, 'that He casteth out devils.' Our adorable Master, knowing their thoughts, spoke to them these words full of wisdom: 'Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand. And if satan cast out satan, he is divided against himself; how then shall his kingdom stand?' (Matt. xii. 24, 26). This reasoning clearly proved that He was not in alliance

with satan, but his enemy and master, since, in forcing him to abandon the bodies of the possessed, He visibly destroyed his empire. Hence the enemies of Jesus Christ were not only covered with confusion, but even forced to hear Him draw this consequence, which made them tremble with rage: 'If I by the finger of God cast out devils, doubtless the kingdom of God is come upon you' (Luke xi. 20). He who speaks to you is truly the Messias promised to your fathers; He comes to establish the reign of God on earth by destroying that of the prince of darkness. Yes, my Jesus, Thou art the Redeemer of mankind and their lawful sovereign. I believe in Thee, but much more I love to meditate on the evidences of my faith; they bind me each day more strongly to Thee, Who art my God, my hope, my salvation, and the only worthy object of my love.

2nd Point.—Importance of the lesson contained in the answers of Jesus.

The infinite wisdom of our divine Lord has concealed in all His words a deep meaning, with which those souls which belong to Him may nourish their piety. Let us meditate carefully the meaning of the following words: 'Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate; and every house divided against itself shall not stand' (Matt. xii. 25). We may consider our soul as this kingdom, the division of which will bring on its ruin: the soul of man possesses three distinct faculties: that of knowing, of loving, and of willing. If these three faculties concur together in perfect harmony in the worship and service of our Lord, the soul will enjoy peace and every blessing which follows in its train: interior joy, holy repose, and an abundance of heavenly gifts; but if the heart gives itself up to dangerous affections, resists the light of the spirit and drags away the will, there will be division and trouble. Remorse of conscience will take the place of the sweet peace which the soul enjoyed when we were faithful; every blessing of grace with which we were enriched and

nourished shall be taken from us, and we shall find ourselves in extreme penury. If we continue to abandon ourselves to our corrupt inclinations, we expose ourselves to still greater evils, for there is every reason to fear that the corruption of the heart will darken the mind, and, causing an entire forgetfulness of the principles of religion, will in the end achieve our ruin. Let us, then, pray to our Lord to teach us, by the light of His grace, how dangerous it is to yield to the suggestions of our corrupt inclinations, and let us beg of Him to penetrate us with a humble diffidence in ourselves, which may lead us to watch and pray without ceasing, that so we may never fall under temptation.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the true Messias, our God, our Master, our Saviour, Who has overthrown the empire of satan. Let us make Him reparation for the blasphemies of the Pharisees, and of all those who have imitated them in their impiety and voluntary obduracy. Let us beg of Him to give us a right understanding of His sacred words, and to penetrate us with the sentiments with which they ought to inspire us. If we have had the misfortune of acting in opposition to the dictates of our conscience, let us humble ourselves, asking pardon, and begging of our divine Lord to repair all the losses which have resulted from our infidelity, promising Him, with the help of His grace, never again to be unfaithful to Him.

Resolutions.—To watch carefully over ourselves, and to be very faithful in resisting temptation.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Watch ye and pray, that ye enter not into temptation' (Matt. xxvi. 41). Jesus my strength and my support, preserve me from yielding to temptation.

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SEVENTY-EIGHTH MEDITATION.

MOTIVES FOR GRATITUDE AND FIDELITY TOWARDS JESUS.

'When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things are in peace which he possesseth. But if a stronger than he come upon him and overcome him, he will take away all his armour wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils. He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth.'—LUKE xi. 21, seq.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself again the place in which our Lord was when He chased away the dumb devil.

2*nd Prelude.*—Enlighten me, O Jesus, that I may understand how much I owe Thee for having delivered me from the tyranny of the devil; grant that after such a benefit I may belong to Thee entirely, without any division.

1*st Point.*—Jesus Christ has delivered us from the slavery of satan.

'When a strong man armed keepeth his court, those things are in peace which he possesseth. But if a stronger than he come upon him and overcome him, he will take away all his armour wherein he trusted, and will distribute his spoils' (Luke xi. 21, 22). In these few words our Lord places before us the entire history of our redemption. The strong man armed, who possessed in peace all that his house contained, is satan, become the master of the world through the sin of our first father; no one creature was capable of depriving him of the tyrannical empire which he exercised over the universe, because he possessed therewith armour and strength. But another One, stronger than satan, has come and overthrown him. Our Lord Jesus, the true Son of God, has clothed Himself with our flesh, and fought a battle with satan, out of which He has come forth triumphant. By His precious death and His

glorious resurrection He has deprived death of its sting, and destroyed the power of hell. Let us apply ourselves to meditate on this mystery, that so we may be filled with gratitude and love towards our adorable Liberator; but if we be not sufficiently moved with the consideration of this benefit common to all mankind, let us enter into a detail of the means through which Jesus has made it our own special benefit. Has there not been some period in our life when, become through our own fault the slave of the demon, we have groaned under his cruel tyranny? Who has taken us from his grasp? The grace of Jesus which has insinuated itself into our heart, and inspired us with the thought of returning to God, and rendered efficacious the means we have taken to recover His friendship. Then an interior combat has taken place within us; Jesus, armed with His grace and His merits, has entered our souls, and victoriously chased away the demon. What gratitude do we not owe Him? Let us beg of Him to penetrate us with these just sentiments, and ask Him to place us for ever under His amiable dominion.

2nd Point.—Jesus desires to possess our undivided heart. 'He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth' (Luke xi. 23). These words give us to understand that if Jesus has triumphed for us, we ought on our side to remain united to Him with complete fidelity. He has taken possession of our souls by His grace, but He has not taken from us the use of our free-will, and we can still withdraw ourselves from the power of His divine love. Let us, then, meditate attentively the important truth contained in these words: 'He that is not with Me is against Me, and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth' (Luke xi. 23). We are not with Jesus when we resist the inspirations of His grace to follow the inclinations of our passions; we are not with Him when we give ourselves up to the world and its vanities, or when we trangress our duties for fear of displeasing men. At such times we are against Him! . . .

Against Jesus! . . . O my God, teach me to comprehend how terrible such a misfortune is. Separated thus from Jesus, we can do nothing meritorious for heaven; for He has said Himself, 'He that gathereth not with Me, scattereth' (Matt. xi. 23). The acts of virtue, even the practices of religion, are then divested of that sacred character which sanctifies them in Jesus Christ, and renders them worthy of eternal recompense; the previous graces received, the spirit of Christianity, the gift of practical faith, and of all other supernatural virtues, disappear little by little; and if this dangerous state be persevered in, there is every reason to fear the soul will be perverted and become entirely obdurate. Let us consider these things seriously, and if we have sometimes had the misfortune to separate ourselves from Jesus, let us now attach ourselves to Him with all our heart and strength, begging Him, by His all-powerful grace, to confirm and strengthen us in our resolution.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as our Saviour, and thank Him lovingly for having freed us from the slavery of satan by His holy death. Let us beg of Him to unite us closely to Himself, and never to permit us to be separated from Him through an attraction for the pleasures of the world, or the fear of man. Let us ask His pardon for our past infidelities, and consecrate ourselves entirely to His service.

Resolutions.—To fly with horror from all that could separate us from Jesus. To implore our divine Master, by frequent elevations of our heart, to assist us by His grace to escape all the snares of our enemies.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'He that gathereth not with Me, scattereth' (Luke xi. 23). 'Stay with us, O Lord' (Luke xxiv. 29).

Prayer.—Receive, O Lord, etc., page 54.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

SEVENTY-NINTH MEDITATION.

DANGER OF A RELAPSE INTO SIN.

'When an unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith: I will return into my house, from whence I came out. And coming, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then he goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is made worse than the first.'—MATT. xii. 43, seq.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—The same as in the preceding meditation.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant me grace, O my God, to conceive a salutary fear of offending Thee, that so, watching over myself with humility, I may deserve to receive from Thee assistance and protection against the snares of my enemies.

1*st Point.*—We ought always to fear the snares of the enemy.

'When an unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith: I will return into my house from whence I came out' (Matt. xii. 43). Those souls who have the happiness to be in the favour of God, ought without doubt to rejoice in the possession of so precious an advantage, and abandon themselves to all the sentiments of joy and gratitude with which they should be justly penetrated; but the more precious the grace of their justification is, the more ought they to fear letting themselves be robbed of it by the enemy of their salvation. Far, then, from slumbering in the presumptuous assurance of having no longer anything to fear, they should not be without apprehension for the grace they have received, knowing that they carry it in fragile vessels, which may be destroyed

by the least shock, if they be not overshadowed and covered by the divine protection: 'Be not without fear about sin forgiven' (Eccl. v. 5), says the Holy Ghost. These words give us to understand that sins effaced by the grace of absolution ought to remind us of our own weakness and of the abyss of corruption which has produced them, that so, instructed by our own experience of the dangers with which we are menaced, we may deserve by vigilance and humility to be preserved from a relapse. When the grace of God took possession of our soul, the demon was constrained to fly; but he does not consider himself vanquished: he will return to surround us with his snares, he will watch for the favourable moment; and if we neglect to close all the avenues of our soul against him, he will not fail to regain his former position in it. The only means of disconcerting his projects is a great distrust in ourselves, accompanied by an unlimited confidence in the protection of God. Let us beg of this good God to place within us this twofold disposition, and let us make practical resolutions in order to maintain it.

2nd Point.—The misery of a soul which relapses into sin.

The sequel of the text on which we have undertaken to meditate presents us with the most powerful motives for watchfulness and holy fear. 'When the unclean spirit saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out,' he returns, says the Evangelist, 'and he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished' (Matt. xii. 44). Our Lord here supposes a soul to open the door and admit the enemy without making any resistance; in order to have the opportunity of picturing to us the frightful evils which result from such unworthy cowardice. 'Immediately,' continues he, 'the wicked spirit goeth and taketh with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of that man is made worse than the first' (Matt. xii. 45).

The concluding words, above all, ought to make us tremble; the depth of the falls are in proportion to the greatness and the number of the graces resisted. What a misfortune it would be for us were we to become unfaithful! Let us pray to Jesus to preserve us from such a sin; but let us endeavour, at the same time, to fix ourselves in unshaken dispositions of vigilance and courage. A good soldier feels his ardour increase at the sight of danger, yet he is not sure of the victory. We are fighting in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, Who has already overcome the devil, the world, and the flesh. With what courage should we not sustain so holy a combat, the victory of which is assured for us if we be but faithful.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us render Him, with the most profound respect, our homage of adoration and praise. Let us thank Him for the salutary instructions which He deigns to give us, and ask His grace to profit fully by them. Let us humble ourselves at His feet for all our infidelities, and lay open the state of our soul to Him, begging Him to aid us, with the assistance of His grace, to acquire the virtues of which we stand in need to enable us to persevere unto the end in His service.

Resolutions.—To watch carefully over ourselves and to call God to our aid by frequent elevations of our heart to Him, that so we may be preserved from sin.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Incline unto my aid, O God; O Lord make haste to help me' (Ps. lxix. 2).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

EIGHTIETH MEDITATION.

PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

'And when a very great multitude was gathered together, and hastened out of the cities unto Him, Jesus spoke by a similitude. The sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the way-side, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And other some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it, choked it. And other some fell upon good ground: and being sprung up, yielded forth a hundredfold.'—LUKE viii. 4, seq.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Figure to yourself the sea-shore, where the crowd is assembled to listen to Jesus, Who instructs them from a ship.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant me grace, O my God, to be penetrated with esteem and respect for Thy Sacred Word, and always to receive it with a heart well prepared.

1*st Point.*—How God has planted His Sacred Word.

'The Sower went out to sow His seed' (Luke viii. 4). Jesus Christ Himself, explaining to His disciples the meaning of this parable, tells them that the seed is the Word of God. Let us endeavour to understand thoroughly, by the help of His grace, the value of this divine word. In general, words are looked upon as the expression of thoughts; the word of God is the means through which He manifests to His creatures His adorable perfections and supreme will. We may distinguish His word in divers ways; God has spoken through the creation and preservation of the universe; 'The Heavens,' says the Prophet King, 'show forth the glory of God, and the firmament declareth the work of His hands. There are no speeches nor languages where their voices are not heard' (Ps. xviii. 1, seq.). God has spoken more expressly when

giving us His holy law; He has willed that this His word should be written, in order that it may be made known to all men. He has spoken, and still speaks to all by the interior voice of His Spirit, which enables them to understand His external word. These three kinds of speech are infinitely precious, but there is yet a fourth more precious still; it is the Incarnation of the Word, the mystery of love through which God has clothed in human form His eternal Word, His Son, Who is with Him one and the same God. Again, great truths are contained in the expressions which Jesus Christ makes use of in conveying to us this instruction. He calls God the Sower, to show us that He sows in God, scattering with profusion the benefit of His divine word over every quarter of the universe, offering this inestimable benefit alike to sinners as to the just. Another expression is still more worthy of remark: the Gospel says that He went out to sow His seed. God dwelt from all eternity in the sanctuary of His infinite perfections; in some sort He came out of Himself when He addressed to men the four different sorts of speech just proposed to our meditation. What motives for gratitude! O, how greatly should the word of God excite our veneration! With what religious care ought we not to receive it and make of it the rule of all our life!

2nd Point.—What are the obstacles which may hinder us from profiting by the word of God?

'And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside and was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And other some fell upon a rock, and as soon as it was sprung up it withered away because it had no moisture. And other some fell among thorns, and the thorns growing up with it choked it. And other some fell upon good ground, and being sprung up, yielded forth a hundred fold' (Luke viii. 6, seq.). Our adorable Master has vouchsafed to give us Himself a very clear and detailed explanation of this parable. 'The seed,' He says, 'is the word of God,

and they by the wayside are they that hear; then the devil cometh, and taketh the word out of their heart, lest believing they should be saved;' that is, because they neglect watchfulness and recollection, the demon of dissipation comes and takes the word out of their heart, lest, believing with a lively and active faith, they should be saved. Those upon the rock are they who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no roots, because their heart, attached to certain vices they will not give up, is hardened. They believe for a time, and in the time of temptation fall away; that is to say, they abandon the transient and superficial resolutions they have made. That which fell among thorns are they who have heard, and going their way, are choked with the cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and yield no fruit. In fine, 'that which fell on good ground are they who in a good and perfect heart, hearing the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit in patience' (Luke viii. 11-15), doing, on their part, all that depends on them to acquire the virtues demanded of them, but awaiting in peace for the Lord to perfect in them little by little the great work which is to last during their entire life.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the eternal Word of the Father, manifested to the world through the ineffable mystery of His Incarnation. Let us offer His merits to God the Father, in thanksgiving to Him for having deigned to speak to us in so many ways, and above all for having given in our favour such an abundant outpouring of riches, of which His divine Word is the infinite source. Let us humble ourselves for the little gratitude we have shown up to the present for such great benefits, and for the little correspondence we have brought to so many graces. Let us beg of our adorable Saviour to destroy every obstacle which could hinder His holy word from taking root and bringing forth fruit within us, promising Him to labour at the task ourselves, and not to neglect anything that may help us to profit by this divine word.

Resolutions.—To practise recollection in order to hear the interior voice of our Lord. To combat courageously our predominant passion, that so we may be in a fit state to profit from the divine word.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth' (1 Kings iii. 9).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

EIGHTY-FIRST MEDITATION.

INTELLIGENCE OF THE THINGS OF GOD.

'Saying these things, He cried out: He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And His disciples asked Him what this parable might be. To whom he said: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God.'—LUKE viii. 8, seq.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 202.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant me grace, O my God, to draw from this meditation a great desire to receive from Thee a clear intelligence of all that relates to my salvation, that so I may acquire, as far as depends on me, the dispositions necessary to attain this inestimable blessing.

1*st Point.*—Intelligence of the divine word is a gift of the Spirit of God.

'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear' (Luke viii. 8). Intelligence of the things of salvation is the most precious gift that God can bestow on a soul. This intelligence does not consist in having that human and entirely speculative knowledge of the word of God which is acquired by study; it is a purely interior light, which attracts the heart at the same time that it enlightens the mind, and gives strength to embrace the good which it makes known. This light is not equally communicated to everyone; those who yield

to the corruption of their heart are incapable of receiving it, for it is a gift of the Holy Ghost, and this spirit of purity cannot dwell within them. When a sinner begins to return to God, the Lord enlightens his eyes with the first rays of this sacred light, and by its favour the horrible state of his soul and the deformity of his vices are recognised: heaven, which he has lost—hell, which is opening beneath his feet; and this sight penetrates him with a salutary fear. If he be faithful, to this fear will soon succeed a sentiment of confidence and love; for his soul, purified by the grace of the sacraments, will enter into the knowledge of the amiability of God; he will receive the intelligence of His law, and his heart will dilate itself and hasten on in the way of His precepts. The prodigies which this divine light works in pure souls are still more precious; these souls are led on from light to light, even to the knowledge of the most sublime secrets of our Lord, for 'the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day' (Prov. iv. 18). O, how desirable is this light of grace! With what care ought I not to purify my heart, that so I may be in a fit state to receive the divine inspirations!

2nd Point.—To receive the gift of understanding we must be the disciple of Jesus.

'His disciples asked Him what this parable might be. To whom He said: To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God' (Luke viii. 9, 10). After our divine Lord had finished speaking to the multitude, He retired to a secluded place, and His disciples, finding themselves alone with Him, asked Him the meaning of the parable they had just heard. Let us, at this moment, imagine that we share with them the happiness of listening to Jesus, and let us apply to ourselves the answer which He deigns to give them: 'To you,' He said, 'it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God' (Luke viii. 10). O words of infinite sweetness! Why, then, O my adorable Lord, why has this gift been conferred upon us?

Thou hast just been speaking to an immense multitude, and it is to us alone Thou reservest the favour of a special explanation and intimate understanding of Thy precious instructions. The Sacred Heart of Jesus answers that we have rights to His divine familiarity, because we are His disciples; but whence do we derive this favour? From the choice which He has deigned to make of us, and from our fidelity in corresponding with that grace; without doubt that fidelity has not been so entire and constant as it ought to have been, but the infinite goodness of Jesus does not refuse us the advantage thereof, and grants us on account of it the most signal graces. O my Jesus! Thy adorable Heart manifests Itself fully in conduct so replete with kindness and indulgence; deign, my divine Master, to penetrate mine with gratitude, and attach it inviolably to Thee by fidelity and love, rendering me more than ever Thy faithful disciple.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the Author of light and the Master of truth. Let us thank Him with a great deal of humility and gratitude for having deigned to choose us, and to admit us among the number of His privileged disciples to whom He has been pleased to reveal the mysteries of His divine word. Let us pray for the unhappy sinners who are far removed from the light of His grace by giving themselves up to works of darkness. Let us beg His pardon for our own infidelities, asking for the graces and making the promises our heart shall suggest.

Resolution.—To produce several acts of fidelity to-day to the interior light of grace.

Offering of the Resolution, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Jesus, the true Light, have mercy on us.' 'To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God' (Luke viii. 10).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

EIGHTY-SECOND MEDITATION.

PARABLE OF THE COCKLE AND THE WHEAT.

'Another parable He proposed to them, saying: The kingdom of heaven is likened to a man that sowed good seed in his field. And while men were asleep, his enemy came and oversowed cockle among the wheat, and went his way. And when the blade was sprung up, and had brought forth fruit, then appeared also the cockle. And the servants of the goodman of the house coming, said to him: Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? Whence, then, hath it cockle? And he said to them: An enemy hath done this.'—MATT. xiii. 24, seq.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself a vast country, in the midst of which is Jesus preaching to the people.

2*nd Prelude.*—Teach me, O Lord, to adore Thy judgments and to fear them, that so, remaining faithful to Thy law, notwithstanding the contradictions of the world, I may deserve to be received at the last day in the abode of eternal recompense.

1*st Point.*—During life, the wicked are mixed with the good.

The parable upon which we now undertake to meditate pictures to us the infinitely wise conduct of our Lord under the emblem of a father of a family, who had sown good grain in his field. This field is the universe; the grains of wheat are the just, whom God has placed on the earth to perfect them in the practice of virtue. The enemy who sows the cockle is the devil, whose malice brought sin into the world, and still corrupts all those he can entrap by his artifices. All of whom he makes himself the master, occupy, together with the just, the field of the father of the family, and afflict them in divers ways by their oppression, persecutions, and scandals, so that they are tempted to ask why God delays to exterminate sinners from the face of the earth. Such was the zeal of the servants in the parable when they saw the cockle growing up with the good grain:

'Lord,' they said, 'wilt Thou that we go and gather it up?' (Matt. xiii. 28). Let us listen to the infinitely wise reply of the Father of the family: 'No,' said he, 'lest perhaps gathering up the cockle you root up the wheat also together with it. Suffer both to grow until the harvest' (Matt. xiii. 29). If God exterminated the wicked from the world, He would deprive the good of the abundant mèrits the bad enable them to acquire by exercising their patience and fidelity; again, it is not impossible for these sinners themselves to be converted and become pure wheat, and yield a precious harvest, of which too great severity would have deprived the Father of the family. This is signified by the words: 'Lest perhaps gathering up the cockle you root up the wheat also together with it' (Matt. xiii. 29). O profound wisdom and infinite goodness of God! . . . I bless Thee with all my heart, O my sovereign Master, for having borne with me, and waited for me when I had the misfortune to be in sin, and I beg of Thy mercy to exercise a like patience towards all who offend Thee, that so overcome by the force of Thy paternal goodness, they may return to Thee and be saved.

2nd Point.—The separation of the wicked from the just will take place at the end of the world.

'In the time of the harvest I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it in bundles to burn, but the wheat gather ye into my barn' (Matt. xiii. 30). When the time shall be accomplished which God has marked out for the duration of the world, all men shall appear before His tribunal, and then will take place the great separation of the wicked from the good. Let us ponder well every expression made use of by our divine Master: 'I will say to the reapers,' that is, the angels, 'Gather up first the cockle' (Matt. xiii. 20). He speaks first of the condemnation of the wicked, that so, having passed rapidly over a subject so painful to His Sacred Heart, He may afterwards dwell with pleasure on the account of the recompenses He has prepared for the elect.

'I will say to the reapers: Gather up first the cockle, and bind it in bundles to burn.' The unhappy reprobate will be united together by fearful bands—the bands of sin. The proud with the proud, the impure with the impure, liars with liars, blasphemers with blasphemers, and these horrible stores will be precipitated into the lake of fire and brimstone, where each different species of iniquity will have its special punishment. 'Gather up first the cockle, and bind it in bundles to burn, but,' our Lord immediately adds, 'the wheat gather ye into My barn' (Matt. xiii. 30). Every word is here an expression of love: 'the wheat gather ye.' That which is precious, or considered to be so, is carefully gathered. God will order His angels to gather up His wheat, grain by grain, from His greatest saints even to the last of His elect; but where will this precious harvest be stored? In the abodes of eternal glory? This even is saying too little; words fail us in which to express the store our Lord will make of them; they will be placed in His barn, in the abode which belongs to Him, and which He honours with His presence. Give me, O my God, a right understanding of all these things, and grant that, adoring the infinitely wise conduct of Thy Providence, I may merit by my fidelity to be gathered at the last day by Thy holy angels as pure and perfect wheat.

Colloquy with God the Father.—Let us adore Him as the Sovereign Master of the universe, Whose providence presides over everything. Let us make Him reparation for the murmurs we have sometimes permitted ourselves to fall into against His adorable dealings; let us give ourselves up to them with the abandonment and confidence of a child, accepting of everything which our Lord shall permit us to suffer from the malice of the impious. Let us beg Him to impress us with a salutary fear of His judgments, at the same time penetrating us with Christian hope, founded on the merits and infinite goodness of Jesus, producing acts thereof.

Resolution.—To support with patience all that the ill-will of creatures may give us to suffer to-day.

Offering of the Resolution, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Thy judgments, O God, are a great deep' (Ps. xxxv. 7) 'made in truth and equity' (Ps. cv. 8). 'Judge me, O God, and distinguish my cause from the nation that is not holy' (Ps. xlii. 1).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

EIGHTY-THIRD MEDITATION.

PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN.

'Another parable Jesus spake to them: The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened.'—MATT. xiii. 33.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 208.

2*nd Prelude.*—Give me grace, O my God, to know intimately how great is the love Thou hast shown to mankind in the accomplishment of the sacred mysteries on which I am about to meditate; grant also that my heart may be inflamed with the sacred fire Thou didst come on earth to enkindle.

1*st Point.*—The parable of the leaven is the figure of the mysteries of the Incarnation and Redemption.

'The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened' (Matt. xiii. 33). Now, leaven is a bitter paste, which, mixed with a new paste, communicates to this its virtue and causes it to ferment. It is under this figure that Jesus Christ images to us the mysteries of love which brought Him down from heaven. He has united His divinity to our human nature; He has submitted to every kind of torment and ignominy—permitting His enemies to cover His body with wounds, to shed His

Blood, to overwhelm Him with opprobrium ; and it is in this state He has been truly that bitter paste whose secret virtue has since communicated itself to the mass of mankind. When Jesus spoke this parable, it was not, and could not be, understood by anyone, since His apostles themselves had so little intelligence regarding the mysteries of His Passion and Death. He spoke it, then, not only for them, but also for those who were to come after them, and would be in a condition to draw from it food for their piety, and for us in particular, who are meditating on it to-day. Let us pray to our divine Lord to discover to us all its depth, and never to permit us to remain insensible to the remembrance of the strongest and most touching of all the testimonies of His infinite love for us.

2nd Point.—The parable of the leaven is the figure of the mystery of the Eucharist. 'The kingdom of heaven is like to leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal' (Matt. xiii. 33). The mysteries of a God made man, immolated in the midst of torments for the redemption of the human race, surpasses, without doubt, all that created intelligence could conceive or hope for from the infinite goodness of God our Lord ; yet this was still too little for the love of Jesus ; He added thereto, in favour of each one of His elect, the gift of His merits, of His graces, of Himself entirely in the divine Eucharist, called by so just a title the Sacrament of His love and of His Sacred Heart. It is by this ineffable mystery that He unites Himself to us ; this union extends to our soul and to our body in so intimate and excellent a manner, that we are transformed into Him. It is this which represents the leaven hid in three measures of meal. But why three measures ? To represent the three powers of our soul, which ought to be quite penetrated with Jesus Christ. Our understanding, united and conformed to His, ought to be occupied with God, and with the things which attach us to His holy

Will ; the affections of our heart ought all to tend towards God ; our will, guided by His love, ought to bring forth fruits bearing its holy impress. Such are the precious effects which the holy Communion ought to produce in our entire being ; but these are not the only fruits of this adorable Sacrament. It implants within us a germ of immortality, which will survive the dissolution of our body ; the eye of God, when it rests on the last remains of our dust, will distinguish in them traces of His well-beloved Son, and at the signal of the resurrection, our bodies will come forth from the tomb, clothed with all the glory due to the living members of Jesus Christ. This is the second rising of the leaven, which is infallibly assured to us, if, during our life, we have allowed the first to take effect by becoming penetrated with the spirit and virtues of the Son of God. How sublime are these mysteries ! To what an exalted dignity do they not raise us ! Ah ! let us understand how unworthy it would be of us to give up our heart to the things of this world, and how ungrateful this heart would be, if it loved not a God who has worked such great wonders for it.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us respectfully render to Him our homage of adoration, love, and thanksgiving. Let us thank Him humbly for having deigned to become man, and die for us, and for having left us in His divine banquet the germ of all virtues and the pledge of future glory. Let us implore Him to apply to our souls the fruits of all these adorable mysteries, asking His pardon for the infidelities whereby we have placed obstacles in the way of His love, and let us make practical resolutions in order to render ourselves in future worthy of these mysteries.

Resolutions.—Often during the day to recur, both in mind and heart, to the great mysteries of love on which we have just meditated, and to consecrate to Jesus Christ our mind, our heart, and our will. To sacrifice our self-love in His honour, and thus to engage Him to take possession of our heart.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in him' (John vi. 57).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

EIGHTY-FOURTH MEDITATION.

PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE AND PRECIOUS PEARL.

'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field. Which a man having found, hid it, and for joy thereof goeth, and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls. Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way, and sold all that he had, and bought it.'—MATT. xiii. 44, seq.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 208.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant me grace, O my God, to appreciate as greatly as I should do all that relates to my salvation, that so, being filled with a sovereign contempt for all else, I may be disposed to lose everything, rather than compromise my eternal interests.

1*st Point.*—The value of all that relates to salvation is infinite.

Our adorable Teacher multiplies comparisons to make us comprehend the excellence of the benefits of grace and glory. These blessings are nothing less than the purchase of His precious Blood; do we think of this when we recklessly waste so many graces? . . . The good works which we perform with the help of grace, give us a right to infinite rewards; these recompenses are measured, not by our own merits, but by those of Jesus, which are then applied to us, and the recompenses are also so great, that the very

least degree of the happiness of the blessed, purchased at the price of all the torments of the martyrs united, would not even then be sufficiently paid for. This was the sentiment of St. Teresa, to whom God had revealed something of this happiness. Were we, then, to collect together in our imagination all the riches of the world, all its honours, all its pleasures, all the advantages of nature, health, wit, talents, knowledge, and then compare all these with the least degree of grace or glory that a Christian soul may acquire by the smallest act of fidelity, there would be a far greater distance between the two sorts of good, than there is between a grain of sand and a huge mountain of gold; or rather no possible comparison could be made between them, since the benefits of nature are fragile, perishable, and human, while those of grace are eternal, and exalt us even to union with God. Let us consider this truth attentively; and when it shall have penetrated to the very centre of our soul, let us ask ourselves to whom we are indebted for goods of such infinite value; and again ask what it cost our divine Lord to purchase them for us; and once more ask what we ought to do for a Saviour to whom we owe so much.

2nd Point.—The benefits of salvation merit to be purchased at the price of every sacrifice.

'The kingdom of heaven is like unto a treasure hidden in a field. Which a man having found, hid it, and for joy thereof goeth, and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like to a merchant seeking good pearls. Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went his way, and sold all that he had, and bought it' (Matt. xiii. 44-46). Many of the saints have done to the letter that which our Lord attributes to the finder of the treasure and the precious pearl. Illumined by vivid light thrown on the value of the goods of grace, they have renounced all things belonging to this world, in order to secure those of the next. God does not call everyone to an entire renunciation, but the same Spirit which inspired the

saints with such great generosity demands that we should unshackle our heart from all that could stop us in our course, and that we should be in the disposition to sacrifice all, should this be asked of us, in order to acquire the treasures of heaven. Surely, if the votaries of the world run after the empty goods of this life with so much ardour; if they undertake long voyages; impose on themselves rigorous privations; undertake great labours, and endure so much fatigue in the uncertain hope of procuring them for themselves: is it not just that the children of God, the co-heirs of Jesus, should give proofs of still greater courage when there is question of securing for ever their rights to the magnificent inheritance of heaven. Penetrate me, O Lord, with dispositions so just and salutary. Grant that it may be, above all, through love and gratitude that I esteem and seek after the goods Thy divine love has merited for me, and now offers me.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the Master and Dispenser of the gifts of grace and glory. Let us thank Him for the invitations and solicitations by which He allures us to enrich ourselves with His gifts, humbling ourselves for our want of zeal up to the present in procuring them. Let us ask Him to discover to us their value by the light of a lively faith, and pray to Him also for all the graces we require to enable us to put our hand to the work in good earnest.

Resolutions.—To apply ourselves with fervour to-day to practise the virtue the most necessary for us, remembering that by our fidelity we shall acquire blessings of an inestimable value.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'If thou didst know the gift of God!' (John iv. 10).

Prayer.—Receive, O Lord, etc., page 54.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

EIGHTY-FIFTH MEDITATION.

JESUS WISHES TO COMMUNICATE TO US HIS ZEAL.

'And Jesus went about all the cities, and towns, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease, and every infirmity. And seeing the multitudes, He had compassion on them: because they were distressed . . . Then He saith to His disciples: The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest that He send forth labourers into His harvest.'—MATT. ix. 35-38.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Figure to yourself the roads, often rugged, of the towns and villages of Judea, through which our Lord travelled to instruct and relieve the people.

2*nd Prelude.*—Adorable Heart of Jesus, immense Furnace of the most pure and burning zeal, I beg of Thee to communicate to my soul some share of the sacred flames which consumed Thee.

1*st Point.*—Jesus is consumed with zeal for the salvation of souls.

The Sacred Heart of our divine Lord is figured entirely to us in this passage of the holy gospel. This adorable Saviour can take no repose; He traverses unceasingly the different places of Judea, curing the sick, raising the dead to life, announcing the divine Word; but the fatigues which He undergoes, the labours He gives Himself up to, cannot satisfy the ardent desire which consumes Him to procure the salvation and happiness of man; His Sacred Heart is oppressed with this, and He relieves It with His dear Apostles by saying to them, 'The harvest indeed is great, but the labourers are few' (Matt. xi. 37). Let us notice the expression: 'the harvest is great.' He compares the labours of His mission to those of common reapers; He who sowed with so much labour and care His divine Word on an ungrateful, arid soil, which He was soon to water with

His Blood. O abyss of love! Why dost Thou so ardently desire, O adorable Heart of Jesus, to make men happy? It is, replies Thy divine Heart, because I am the Fountain and Source itself of the love of God. Yes, it is a mystery of love we are called upon to understand, we who are admitted by Jesus to His intimacy; His Sacred Heart, united to God the Son, is the centre of all the flames of the love of that God Who is goodness by essence. The Sacred Humanity of Jesus Christ, united to the Word, Who is God, makes with Him but one and the same Person; all His love becomes then concentrated in a human heart, which is His own Sacred Heart; and as this God-man has only come on the earth to exercise amongst us the office of Saviour, all His other perfections are united, so to speak, that His infinite love alone may act. O impenetrable abyss! I adore Thee, Sacred Heart of my Saviour and my God; inflame me with Thy ardour, transform me into Thee, that so I may love Thee with a love which will bear some resemblance to the love wherewith Thou hast loved me.

2*nd Point.*—Jesus desires that His disciples should imitate the ardour of His zeal.

'The harvest, indeed, is great, but the labourers are few. Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth labourers into His harvest' (Matt. xiii. 37, 38). All that our divine Lord said to His first Apostles is equally addressed to us; for the numberless graces with which He has presented us, the intelligence He has given us of the value of souls redeemed by His Blood, the sentiments of zeal He has so often excited within us, engage us to labour at the work which is so dear to Him, the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Let us, then, receive with respect the order given us in these words: 'Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that He send forth labourers into His harvest' (Matt. ix. 38). It is as if He said: Do not be satisfied with labouring yourselves with all your strength to establish and extend the reign of God in souls, but endeavour to inspire others also with your zeal. I am

come to cast fire upon the earth; it is already enkindled in your heart, but this is not sufficient; my will is that it should burst forth, that it should communicate itself to others, and consume all with its ardours. And as this fire descended from heaven cannot be enkindled by human means, as of yourselves you are incapable of maintaining it within you, or of communicating it to others, pray ye the sovereign Lord, Who alone disposes of grace, to send forth these labourers who ought to work at His harvest. Yes, my Jesus, I will pray, and to Thee, my Lord, I will address my requests; enkindle in all hearts Thy divine fire, change all Thy disciples into apostles, and vouchsafe to grant an ample benediction to the labours of their zeal.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as our Saviour and the zealous lover of our souls, pouring ourselves forth in His presence in sentiments of respect, gratitude, and love. If we do not find within us this ardent zeal, the distinctive mark of the true disciple of Jesus, let us humble ourselves, and beg of our divine Master to implant it within our heart by His grace. If we be penetrated already with it, let us return humble acts of thanksgiving to our Lord; for such a disposition is a gift of His bounty; and let us ask Him to render it efficacious by causing us to produce by its means abundant and solid fruits.

Resolution.—To embrace with joy every opportunity which shall present itself to-day of exercising our zeal.

Offering of the Resolution, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'I am come to cast fire upon the earth; and what will I, but that it be enkindled?' (Luke xii. 49); or, 'Jesus, zealous lover of souls, make my heart like Thine.'

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

EIGHTY-SIXTH MEDITATION.

THAT WE OUGHT NOT TO FEAR MAN BUT CONFIDE IN GOD.

'Fear ye not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him that can destroy both body and soul into hell . . . Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father . . . But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; better are you than many sparrows.'—MATT. x. 28-31.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself a road or a city of Judea: and behold our Lord in it surrounded by His disciples.

2*nd Prelude.*—Divine Jesus, I beg of Thee to cause my heart to be penetrated with the words of peace I am about to meditate; strengthen, O Lord, my confidence in Thee, and do not permit that the fear of man should ever cause me to be wanting in the fidelity I owe Thee.

1*st Point.*—Man can do us no real evil.

'Be not afraid of them who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do' (Luke xii. 4). Our divine Saviour, foreseeing the persecutions which the zeal of His disciples would bring on them, warns them against the fear they might have thereof by placing before their eyes the weakness of men, who can but reach the body and are incapable of injuring the soul of such as are faithful. Let us consider in effect that the rage of the Jews and Pagans, far from injuring the first Christians, was advantageous to them; it procured for them the precious grace of martyrdom, and put them in possession of an eternal and glorious palm of victory. Without doubt they are now congratulating themselves on their combats, and experience the truth of those other words of our Lord: 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you for My sake' (Matt. v. 11). But what fruit can we draw from these important

lessons? The fruit of a supreme contempt for the judgments of men, when there is question of showing our fidelity to God; or, above all, when there is question of showing our zeal for His cause or His interests. Grant me grace, O my God, to enter into these dispositions, and grant that I may be worthy, by constant generosity, to have part in Thy divine promises.

2nd Point.—God protects us, and watches over us with truly paternal care.

Our adorable Lord continues to fortify His disciples against all kinds of fear. He reminds them of the goodness of their heavenly Father, and of His watchful care. 'Are not,' He says, 'two sparrows sold for a farthing; nevertheless, not one of them shall fall to the ground without the will of your heavenly Father.' And He adds: 'Yea, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows' (Luke xii. 5, 7). When men shall persecute you, when the powers of hell shall be let loose in all their rage against you, your heavenly Father will shield you with His protection; and if the weapon of the sportsman cannot harm the smallest bird without God's permission, for a much stronger reason will He preserve you from trials which would be beyond your strength, by putting limits to the power of your enemies beyond which they cannot pass. These promises are given to us; why, then, should we still fear the attacks and contradictions of a world which, after all, will never dare to wage a real persecution? O my God! I acknowledge it; I should be rendering myself guilty of an unworthy cowardice, and outraging Thy fatherly goodness if I allowed myself to be intimidated and turned away from my duties by the fear of men. I promise Thee with all my heart to despise for ever this fear; but I can do nothing without Thy help; vouchsafe, then, to bestow it on me; I implore this of Thee through the merits of Jesus and Thy own infinite bounty.

Colloquy with God the Father.—Let us adore Him as the

all-powerful Lord, who disposes of all things as He pleases, and covers with His protection all His elect. Let us make several acts of Faith and confidence in this protection, humbly asking His pardon if our conscience reproaches us with having yielded at times to human respect. Let us beg of Him to make us understand how injurious to Him such unworthy weakness is, and promise Him, with the assistance of His grace, never more to yield to such cowardice.

Resolutions.—To do all the good we can to-day, in the sight of God, without any human fear. If any special opportunity should offer of braving this fear, to be on our guard and not let it escape us.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'The Lord is my refuge and my strength' (Ps. xlv. 1).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

EIGHTY-SEVENTH MEDITATION

WE MUST CONFESS JESUS BEFORE MEN AND CARRY THE CROSS AFTER HIM.

'Every one that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father Who is in heaven; but he that shall deny me before men, I will also deny him before My Father Who is in heaven . . . And he that taketh not up his cross and followeth Me, is not worthy of Me.'—MATT. x. 32, seq.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1st Prelude, page 220.

2nd Prelude.—Inspire me, O Lord, with that fear which is a gift of Thy holy Spirit; grant that, meditating on Thy promises and Thy menaces, my soul may become strengthened in the fidelity it owes Thee.

1st Point.—Jesus acknowledges those only as His own who confess Him before men.

'Everyone that shall confess Me before men, I will also confess Him before My Father Who is in heaven; and he that shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father Who is in heaven' (Matt. x. 32, 33). We love Jesus Christ, and in the depth of our heart we glory in belonging to Him; often even the love which we have for Him leads us to overcome our timidity, and bear a certain amount of raillery which our piety draws on us; yet, as our weakness is so great that we cannot diffide in it too much, it is well that we should be penetrated with a salutary fear, which may serve to support us in difficult circumstances. Let us, then, transport ourselves in spirit to that great day when Jesus Christ will come in the splendour of His glory to judge the living and the dead; let us represent to ourselves the majesty with which He will then be surrounded; let us imagine we see Him presenting to His Father, as faithful disciples, those who during their life shall have trampled under foot the childish fears of human respect; and driving away far from Him those who shall have been its slaves, speaking to them these terrible words: 'Amen, I know you not . . .' (Matt. xxv. 12). Let us endeavour to penetrate our inmost soul with the sentiments and emotions which will take possession of it in that awful moment, and let us ask ourselves if they who make us tremble to-day will have it in their power either to accuse us or defend us before that sovereign Judge Whose sentence will be irrevocable. . . . O my Saviour! preserve me from the misfortune of incurring Thy indignation on that dreadful day! Impress me so vividly with a fear of Thy judgments, that I may become entirely insensible to those of men.

2nd Point.—Jesus only recognises as His own those who carry their cross after Him.

'He that taketh not up his cross and followeth Me is not worthy of Me' (Matt. x. 38). If we love Jesus we ought to desire to be like unto Him, for love tends to

union, and union exacts conformity. We must, then, resolve to carry our cross, and to follow Him in the painful road wherein He has walked before us; this condition at first alarms our miserable nature, yet there is no other means whereby we can attain happiness even in this life. In fact, everyone on earth is obliged to suffer; the votaries of the world suffer as much as, and often more than, the children of God, and their sufferings are the more bitter because they are divested of that precious unction, which the love of God and the hope of eternal recompense mingles with the afflictions of the just. It is, then, a great happiness for us to be able to unite our cross to that of Jesus; through this ours becomes lighter to carry, and meritorious for heaven. What, then, must we do to follow Jesus in the royal road of the cross? It suffices for us to accept with submission all the trials of this wretched life, to embrace willingly the restraints attached to the accomplishment of our duties, and to keep ourselves in dispositions to make every sacrifice our Lord may ask of us. In all this there is nothing beyond our strength, aided by grace, and this grace will never be wanting to us, if we have but a good will. O my Saviour! Thy divine Cross is the treasure of Thy true disciples; grant that I may attach myself to it lovingly and by choice, and that I may carry it with joy all the days of my life until it shall have brought me to eternal happiness.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as our God, our Sovereign Master and our Judge, and make acts of faith, submission and respect, corresponding with these titles, together with acts of love and confidence. Jesus never ceases to be a Father, even when He threatens, since He proposes to Himself no other end than to preserve us, by a salutary fear, from the evils it enables us to foresee. Let us beg of Him to impress this fear strongly within our heart, and at the same time to spread abroad in it His holy love, that so we may be aided both by the one

and the other to walk in the holy ways of the Cross, and overcome all the obstacles we may meet therein.

Resolutions.—To despise human respect. To surmount generously all the repugnances of nature which hinder us from accomplishing our duties faithfully.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'He that shall confess Me before men, I will confess him before My Father Who is in heaven' (Matt. x. 32). 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me' (Luke ix. 23).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

EIGHTY-EIGHTH MEDITATION.

PROMISE OF JESUS TO THOSE WHO GIVE ALMS IN A SPIRIT OF FAITH.

'He that receiveth you, receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive the reward of a prophet; and he that receiveth a just man in the name of a just man, shall receive the reward of a just man. And whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward.'—MATT. x. 40, 41, 42.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 220.

2*nd Prelude.*—Jesus, my adorable Master, grant me grace to understand well of what advantage it is to me to consider Thee in Thy ministers and suffering members, and to be animated by a true spirit of faith in performing for them the services I may have it in my power to render them.

1*st Point.*—We ought to behold Jesus Christ in the persons of His ministers.

We do not always sufficiently understand how precious in the eyes of Jesus Christ are the services rendered for His sake to His ministers; let us, then, endeavour to-day to nourish our piety with the words pronounced by this divine Saviour, the infallible Truth Who can neither deceive nor be deceived: 'He that receiveth you receiveth Me' (Matt. x. 40). If an angel, descended from heaven, came to announce that our divine Lord in person would, by a singular privilege, honour us with His presence, receive the testimonies of our veneration, and even permit us to offer Him the necessaries of life; if Jesus Christ Himself deigned to carry His condescension even so far as to communicate to us the projects of His zeal, saying: 'My child, I contemplate vast undertakings; I must go beyond the seas to cause the light of faith to shine in the midst of infidel countries; I wish also to found and support houses destined for the relief of the sick, the education of youth, and other works not less precious to My Sacred Heart, and I reckon on thee to aid Me with all thy power in these holy undertakings'—what would be our eagerness to do our utmost to enter into the views of our divine Master! what privations should we not impose on ourselves in order to make our offerings larger and more abundant; with what joy should we not make them, and how greatly should we not esteem such a happiness! This happiness may be ours if we be willing, for we have the word of Jesus Christ for it: 'He that receiveth you receiveth Me' (Matt. x. 40). Elsewhere He has said, 'As long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me' (Matt. xxv. 40). And here he adds: 'He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive the reward of a prophet' (Matt. x. 41). O, how greatly should these promises inspire us with ardour to uphold and support, according to our power, the ministers of the Gospel! My God, grant me grace always to show myself zealous in fulfilling this sacred duty.

2nd Point.—We ought to behold Jesus Christ in the persons of the poor.

'And whosoever shall give to drink to one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, amen, I say to you, he shall not lose his reward' (Matt. x. 42). Almsgiving is always a good work which disposes God to diffuse His graces on those who practise it; but in order that it may merit eternal recompense, it must be animated with a motive of faith and supernatural charity. Let us enter into the depth of our heart and examine before God, if, in the exercise of so holy a work, we never expose ourselves to lose a part of our recompense, through not purifying our motives sufficiently. To give alms or render some service to our neighbour through a purely natural sentiment of compassion, and without any motive of faith, is to exercise only human virtue. To exalt this sentiment by a motive of faith, such as to obey God, Whose will it is that we should help others, or to deserve the rewards promised to charity, is to render this action very noble, most excellent, and profitable for our salvation; but to give alms with a faith so lively that it causes us to behold Jesus Christ Himself in the persons of the poor, according to the words He has pronounced: 'Amen, I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me' (Matt. xxv. 40), is to exercise this virtue in so perfect and meritorious a manner that it gives us a right to every gift both of grace and glory. What have been my dispositions and my motives when I have aided the suffering members of Jesus? O my Saviour, fill me with Thy Spirit, discover to me the defects which have accompanied my almsgiving, and grant me the gift of a pure and upright intention, which may have nothing but Thy love in view in the good I do.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as our Saviour and Master, thanking Him for having, by an effect of His love, left us, on quitting the world, the means of serving and assisting Him, as if He were still visibly amongst us. Let us humble ourselves if our conscience reproach us with having had little of the spirit of faith in our works of zeal

and charity, asking pardon thereof of our divine Lord, and praying Him to grant us the lively faith we need. Let us promise Him to do all in our power to second His grace and acquire this precious virtue.

Resolutions.—To apply ourselves to behold Jesus Christ in the persons of His ministers and of the poor. If we should not have to-day a special opportunity of doing this, to exercise a greater spirit of faith in our intercourse with others, whoever they may be, trying to oblige all, and lead them to God.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Whatsoever you shall do unto the least of these My brethren, ye did it unto Me (Matt. xxv. 40).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

EIGHTY-NINTH CONTEMPLATION.

MULTIPLICATION OF THE LOAVES.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—'And Jesus going out saw a great multitude: and He had compassion on them, . . . and began to teach them many things. And when the day was now far spent, His disciples came to Him, saying: This is a desert place, and the hour is now past. Send them away, that going into the next villages and towns, they may buy themselves meat to eat. And He answering said to them: Give you them to eat' (and He multiplied miraculously five barley loaves and two fishes, so that all the people were filled).—Mark vi. 34, seq.

2*nd Prelude.*—Represent to yourself a vast plain on the sea-shore, and a mountain, on which Jesus is seated, with His disciples; an immense crowd is assembled at the foot of the mountain.

3rd Prelude.—Grant me grace, O Lord, to understand the power and goodness wherewith Thou dost provide for all those who forget themselves to listen to Thee and to follow Thee.

1st Point.—Consider the persons. Jesus, our adorable Lord; let us contemplate His air of kindness and modest dignity, together with the impress of divinity diffused around His Sacred Person. The Apostles; they are uneasy and pre-occupied: they want our divine Lord to dismiss the people quickly, but through respect they dare not interrupt Him. Let us view that immense multitude, composed of more than five thousand persons; they are listening to Jesus; let us notice the religious attention of some, and the curiosity of others who have followed Jesus only to see His miracles . . . The divine word works in them according to their dispositions.

2nd Point.—Listen to the words: 'When the day was now far spent, His disciples approached Him, saying, This is a desert place, and the hour is now past. Send away the people, that going into the next villages and towns, they may buy themselves meat to eat. Jesus answered and said to them, Give you them to eat. And they said to Him: Let us go and buy bread for two hundred pence, and we will give them to eat' . . . (Mark vi. 34– 37). 'When Jesus, therefore, had lifted up His eyes, and seen that a very great multitude cometh to Him, He said to Philip: Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this He said to try him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworths of bread are not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little' (John vi. 5, seq.). Thou mightest have added, holy apostle. But if human means fail us, Thy power can easily supply for it. 'How many loaves have you?' said Jesus; 'go and see' (Mark vi. 38). And they having ascertained what they had, answered, 'There is a boy here that hath five barley loaves, and two fishes; but what are these among so many?' (John vi. 9),

'unless, perhaps, we should go and buy food for all this multitude' (Luke ix. 13) . . . There were about five thousand men, besides women and children, and Jesus ordered that they should sit down in companies of fifty on the grass; and all the people were watching the result.

3rd Point.—Consider the actions. The Apostles hasten to execute the order which has been given them: they divide the people into different parties—some of one hundred and others of fifty, and they make them sit down on the grass before their divine Master, Who looks down kindly on all from the top of the hill where He is seated. . . . This done, Jesus takes the five loaves and the two fishes, and raising His eyes to heaven, He blesses them . . . then He breaks the bread, and gives it to His disciples, that they may carry it to those who were seated . . . In like manner He divides the two fishes; the Apostles distribute them, giving them as much as they need; all eat and are filled . . . 'And He said to His disciples: Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost' (John vi. 12). 'They obeyed, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments' . . . The witnesses of the miracle which had just been worked, said one to another, 'This is of a truth the Prophet that is to come into the world' (John vi. 14). But Jesus, knowing that they would come and take Him to make Him king, made His disciples go into the ship, and pass on before Him to the other side of the lake; then He dismissed the people, and remained alone on the mountain, there to pass the night in prayer.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the true Son of God, and a Saviour full of kindness, Who provides with paternal tenderness for the wants of all those who follow Him. Let us beg Him to replenish us with a just sentiment of confidence, and to teach us to abandon to Him the care of all that concerns us, that so we may think only of serving and pleasing Him. Let us ask of Him the grace to nourish ourselves frequently and profit-

ably with the divine Eucharist, of which the bread He multiplied was the figure. Let us lay before Him all the wants of our soul, begging Him to have pity on us, as He had pity on the crowd that followed Him into the desert.

Resolutions.—If to-day we experience any want, either for our soul or body, to have recourse to Jesus with great confidence. To fulfil all our duties in a spirit of faith with a view to follow Jesus, and to render ourselves worthy of His special care.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you (Matt. vi. 33).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

NINETIETH CONTEMPLATION.

JESUS WALKS ON THE WATERS, AND BEARS UP ST. PETER UPON THEM.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—The boat which the Apostles had entered by the order of their divine Master to cross the lake was tossed with the waves in the midst of the sea, for the wind was contrary. 'And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them walking upon the sea. . . . And He said to them: It is I; fear ye not. . . And Peter, making answer, said: Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waves. And Jesus said to him: Come. And Peter, going down out of the boat, walked upon the water to come to Jesus' (Matt. xiv. 24, seq.).

2*nd Prelude.*—Place yourself in spirit on the mountain where Jesus has retired to pray, and from its summit represent to yourself the lake agitated by the wind: it is

three o'clock in the morning; the moon is at its full, and by its light can be distinguished the frail bark of the Apostles in the midst of the waves.

3rd Prelude.—I beg of Thee, my divine Saviour, to enliven my faith more and more in Thy divine power, and to strengthen my confidence in Thy infinite goodness. Teach me to know well, in the depth of my heart, that Thou dost never abandon those who love Thee, but renderest all things possible to their good will.

1st Point.—Consider the persons: Our adorable Lord alone on the mountain where He has retired—He prays; let us contemplate Him for an instant; He is kneeling; His head is bowed down. What recollection! . . . He teaches us by His example how to pray, and merits for us the grace to do so. . . . But the sweetness and repose of prayer does not make Him lose sight of His dear disciples, whom He watches from afar. . . . They are in the midst of the sea, where the wind has tossed them in spite of their efforts; they are endeavouring uselessly to reach the port of Bethsaida. . . . Their difficulty is great, for the wind blows on all sides, and the sea is swelling more and more. . . . Yet they continue to row. It is thus that in the midst of the greatest difficulties I ought to persevere in the service of our Lord, and await with patience the help He never fails to grant those who hope in Him.

2nd and 3rd Points.—Listen to the words, and consider the actions. Jesus comes to the aid of His apostles, walking upon the waters. They perceive Him, and utter a cry of terror: 'It is a spirit' (Matt. xiv. 26), they say one to the other, quite troubled; but the voice of their divine Master makes itself heard: 'Be of good heart; it is I; fear ye not' (Matt. xiv. 27). They are overpowered with joy. How sweet the moment is when Jesus, after a painful trial, says to us in the depth of our heart: 'It is I; be of good courage'! Peter, transported by the ardour of his love, replies: 'Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come to Thee upon the waters. Jesus said to him, Come' (Matt. xiv.

28, 29). O powerful word! It has filled the soul of Peter with a lively faith and firm confidence: he goes down out of the boat, and walks on the waters to go to Jesus. . . . O holy apostle! what were the feelings which at this moment throbbed within thy heart? What should I have experienced had I been in thy place? Often our divine Saviour also says to me: Come; leave yourself; abandon without fear all attachment to your own lights, to walk with assurance in the path traced out for you by obedience; fear not; it will become firm beneath your steps, and your faith will triumph over all the dangers which terrify your troubled imagination. Ah! if I were but faithful like unto Thee! However, St. Peter perceives that the wind is high; he fears; the weakness of his faith causes the miracle to cease; he begins to sink, and cries out: 'Lord, save me!' (Matt. xiv. 30). At the same moment Jesus stretches out His hand to him, and takes hold of him. O my loving Saviour! It is with the same goodness Thou dost succour me when I call Thee to my aid, and not only dost Thou extend to me a helping hand, but Thou dost open unto me Thy Sacred Heart as a safe asylum under all dangers. Jesus gives His apostle a slight reproof: 'O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?' (Matt. xiv. 31), He says to him. Then yielding to the desire of His disciples, He enters the ship, and makes Peter do the same; the wind ceases, and in an instant they miraculously reach the shore towards which they were travelling, accomplishing in a moment a journey of several hours. So many wonders arouse the faith of the disciples; they adore their divine Master, saying: 'Indeed Thou art the Son of God' (Matt. xiv. 33). My Jesus, I unite my voice to theirs; deign to accept the homage I render Thee with all my heart.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us prostrate ourselves in spirit at His feet, adore Him, and produce acts of faith and hope in His power and goodness. Let us beg of Him to strengthen within us these two precious virtues, and to

grant us the grace to practise them faithfully, above all in moments of trial.

Resolutions.—If any temptation or difficulty should arise within us to-day, to call Jesus to our aid, and place all our confidence in Him.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Lord, save me!' (Matt. xiv. 30). 'Indeed Thou art the Son of God!' (Matt. xiv. 33).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

NINETY-FIRST MEDITATION.

THE EXCELLENCE OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST, AND CONDITIONS NECESSARY TO RECEIVE IT WORTHILY.

'When, therefore, the multitude saw that Jesus was not there, . . . they came to Capharnaum seeking Him. And when they had found Him, they said to Him: Rabbi, when camest Thou hither? Jesus answered them, and said: Amen, amen, I say to you; you seek Me, not because you have seen miracles, but because you did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting.'—JOHN vi. 24-27.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself, in a public place in Capharnaum, Jesus surrounded by His disciples, and an immense crowd of people.

2*nd Prelude.*—O my God, give me understanding! Discover to me by Thy sacred light how precious is the divine food of the holy Eucharist; bestow on me also an intimate knowledge of the fidelity with which I ought to serve Thee, in order to be worthy to receive it with fruit.

1*st Point.*—The excellence of the holy Eucharist.

'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that

which endureth unto life everlasting' (John vi. 27). Our adorable Lord, wishing to make known to the people the exalted mysteries contained in the Sacrament of Love which He was so soon to institute, commences by exciting their desires, that so the disposition of their heart might prepare their mind to receive without difficulty such sublime truths. He speaks to them accordingly of a food which nourishes to life eternal. We know this divine food; it is the adorable Eucharist, the infinite gift of the love of our Saviour, which contains really and truly His Body, His Blood, His Soul, and His Divinity under the species of bread and wine. Let us consider how greatly this divine mystery ought to penetrate us with admiration, gratitude and love towards this adorable Saviour. 'My flesh,' He says, 'is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed' (John vi. 56). The Son of God wished to communicate Himself to our souls; become man for our salvation, and destined for that great sacrifice which was to open heaven for us, He desired that the fruits of His Incarnation and Death should be fully applied to us; He wished that, freed through His Blood from the death of sin, we should have in Him eternal life; and in order to communicate this life unto us, He has chosen that means among all others which best proves His infinite love for us—a means we could never have imagined; He, our God, has made Himself the food of our souls. In order to know the just value of such a gift, and the love of Him who gives it, we must understand Who God is, and who we are. Mystery above all mysteries! Jesus Christ has said, 'Is not the life more than the meat?' (Matt. vi. 25). Here, without doubt, we ought to exclaim, 'The meat is infinitely more than the life.' Yet, as in the works of the Lord the end is always worthy of the means, He would not have given this divine food to man, if the life which it was to maintain had not possessed in His eyes a value corresponding to it. How great, then, is the dignity of our souls! O how intimate should be their communications with the Divinity! How

happy are they to be so tenderly loved by God, and how eager we ought to be to show ourselves worthy of so much love!

2nd Point.—The condition necessary to participate with fruit in the divine Eucharist.

'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting' (John vi. 27). The Jews, touched with these words, said to Jesus Christ: 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' (John vi. 28). Let us beg of our divine Saviour, as they did, to teach us what works will best prepare us to receive with fruit this precious food, and let us listen to the answer He deigns to give us. He says: 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him Whom He hath sent' (John vi. 29). Practical faith is, then, the principal virtue to which all ought to apply themselves who have the happiness of communicating; it is for faith to develop in our souls the precious effects of this adorable Sacrament, by making us practise the virtues of which it is the sacred source. It would serve us very little to receive Jesus Christ within our hearts if we neglected afterwards to co-operate with the precious graces He scatters in them with profusion. Now this co-operation is nothing else but the spirit of faith by which we raise ourselves above the debased inclinations of nature and the perverse maxims of the world, in order to do what faith orders us, and to seek only the goods which it promises us. It is by a spirit of faith that we learn to regulate our judgments by those of Jesus Christ, to love what He loved, to hate what He hated, and to conduct ourselves according to His example. If we were well penetrated with this spirit, we should glory in belonging to God, and all other glory would seem to us in comparison nothing but vanity and smoke; we should seek after the goods of eternity with more ardour than the votaries of the world seek after the false goods which seduce them; we should love Jesus with a love so ardent that we should receive from His

divine hand trials and joys with equal acts of thanksgiving. What a subject of confusion for me, O my Saviour, to find myself, after so many Communions, so different from what I ought to be! Thou ordainest not, however, that I should cease to hope in Thee, O infinite Goodness! I do, then, hope in Thee, and with all my heart I desire to begin, with the help of Thy grace, to profit as I ought from the Sacrament of Thy love.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us thank Him lovingly for the inestimable gift of Himself Which He has bestowed on us in the divine Eucharist, and let us ask Him for the grace always to receive this adorable Sacrament worthily. Let us implore Him to forgive us the negligence which has hindered us from profiting from it as much as we ought to have done, making at His feet acts of contrition and love. Let us lay before Him with great confidence the many wants of our soul.

Resolutions.—To do all our actions to-day through a motive of faith, in order to stir up within us the necessary dispositions to communicate worthily.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto life everlasting' (John vi. 27).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

NINETY-SECOND MEDITATION.

EFFECTS OF THE HOLY COMMUNION.

'I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall not hunger; and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst.'—JOHN vi. 35.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Let us imagine anew that we are with the

disciples and followers of Jesus Christ, listening to His sacred words: an immense crowd surrounds our divine Lord.

2nd Prelude.—Divine Jesus, the life and happiness of my soul, vouchsafe to discover unto me and to make me taste how sweet Thou art, that so, being sweetly replenished with Thy love, I may be disgusted with all earthly things.

1st Point.—Jesus in His divine Sacrament is the bread of life.

All is love in the divine mystery of the Eucharist; Jesus Christ becomes therein Himself our bread, a living bread, the fruitful source of the life which He implants in our heart, and causes to circulate in our veins. It is not with this sacred bread as with material food; the latter is incorporated within us, and is ennobled by becoming our substance; the Eucharistic bread incorporates us with Jesus Christ, rendering us more completely His members, and giving us life in Him in so perfect a manner, that after receiving the Holy Communion we are able to say with St. Paul, 'I live now, not I; but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. ii. 20). By the virtue of this divine life our souls are preserved from the death of sin. 'Your fathers did eat manna in the desert and are dead,' said Jesus Christ, speaking to the Jews; 'This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that if any man eat of it he may not die' (John vi. 49, 50). I am, then, assured that the Holy Communion will preserve me from sin, unless I by my own will commit it. What a happy assurance! This sacrament of life extends its precious effects even to our body; it implants in our flesh a germ of resurrection, which will be developed at the last day, and then put us in possession of a glorious and never-ending life. 'He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day' (John vi. 55). How precious, then, is the infinite gift of the Eucharist! It required all the wisdom of a God to

invent it, and all His love to bestow it on man. O my adorable Jesus! never permit me to be so ungrateful as to disregard such great goodness, or to be so much my own enemy as to neglect profiting by it.

2nd Point.—Jesus in the divine Eucharist satiates our souls with daintiness.

'I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst' (John vi. 35). Jesus, the true Bread of Heaven, contains all sorts of lusciousness, as Holy Church expresses it. This incarnate God shrouds, it is true, under the Eucharistic veils, His adorable perfections as well as His infinite beauty, which will for ever constitute the happiness of the Saints in heaven. It is true that this sweet Saviour does not usually manifest to the souls that receive Him all the treasures of the Godhead. He conceals them in order to leave the communicant the merit of faith, and to make them practise virtue in a more solid and disinterested manner; but as we cannot approach a great fire without feeling at least some heat, in like manner the source of heavenly delights cannot be so closely shut but that at least some drops must escape thence; thus souls well prepared find in Holy Communion a pleasure so pure and perfect, that they entertain only contempt and disgust for the pleasures of the world and earthly joys. This heavenly food allays the heat of concupiscence, inspires the soul with chaste affections and virtuous desires; thus fulfilling in her the promise of Jesus Christ: 'He that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst' (John vi. 35). If the false show of the things of this world seduce me, if I am still alive to that which flatters my sensuality and pleases my self-love, it is because I have not as yet sufficiently experienced the sweetness of the holy Eucharist, or that, having experienced it, I have lost the remembrance thereof. What shall I do then, O my God? I will return to Thy holy table with better dispositions, and I will endeavour by humble fidelity to deserve

to share in the delights which Thou dost give without measure to souls that are pure.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him with all the love of which we are capable, and make acts of lively faith in the effects which the divine Eucharist produces in well prepared souls. Let us humble ourselves for having drawn, up to the present, so little fruit from this august Sacrament. Let us pray to Jesus with great confidence to give us His holy grace, in order to redeem the time we have lost; making practical resolutions at His feet.

Resolutions.—To produce several acts of interior mortification to-day, with a view to prepare ourselves for Holy Communion.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'I am the bread of life (John vi. 48). Jesus, our Way and our Life, have mercy on us.

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

NINETY-THIRD MEDITATION.

OTHER EFFECTS OF THE BLESSED EUCHARIST.

'He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me.'—JOHN vi. 57, 58.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude,* page 237.

2*nd Prelude.*—Divine Jesus, grant me grace always to make good and fervent Communions, that so Thou mayest dwell in me by Thy grace, and that I may dwell in Thee by my love and fidelity.

1*st Point.*—The Holy Communion unites us to Jesus Christ.

'He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth

in Me and I in him' (John vi. 57). Our adorable Saviour in giving Himself to us in Holy Communion, does not come into our heart merely to leave it again; He wishes to dwell there, and dwells there in very deed, if we preserve with care the fruits of this adorable Sacrament. A heart which has received Jesus and remains united to Him by recollection and fidelity, is a living tabernacle wherein He resides with love and delight. He sweetly communicates Himself to that soul, floods it with His graces, and fills it ever more and more with the sacred fire of His love. This divine Lord, speaking to His disciples, said to them: 'I am the vine, you are the branches; he that abideth in Me and I in him, the same beareth much fruit' (John xv. 5). Thus after Holy Communion we are so intimately united to Him, that we live by His life, it is He Who implants within us the virtues of which we produce the acts, as the sap from the trunk communicates itself to the branches and causes them to bear fruit. Oh! if we could but understand how close are the sweet ties which then unite us to Jesus Christ! No earthly alliance can give us any just idea of them; hence our adorable Lord does not disdain to call our souls His spouses, and Himself their Spouse. O my divine Saviour, with what respect and love and holy joy should not my soul be penetrated at the approach of those sweet moments which are to accomplish so precious a union. Adorable Jesus, sovereign Lover of pure souls, in Thee alone can repose and peace and happiness be found. I beg of Thee, then, destroy all those ties which keep me attached to the world and to myself, that so I may unite myself to Thee, never more to be separated from Thee, either in time or in eternity.

2nd Point.—Holy Communion ought to render us like Jesus Christ.

'He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood abideth in Me and I in Him' (John vi. 57). Why does Jesus give us under the shadow of faith, in this land of our pilgrimage, the same treasure which in heaven will consti-

tute our happiness and glory: why does He conceal Himself in the depth of our heart, never to depart thence unless we willingly drive Him from it? It is in order to apply to us, to their fullest extent, the fruits of His Incarnation and Death. He has wrought these mysteries of mercy and love only in order to render us like unto Himself: other Christs, through union with His merits and the imitation of His virtues; it is His will that every Christian should glorify His Father as He has Himself glorified Him, and for this reason He reproduces Himself, so to speak, within us, that He may make of us true 'adorers in spirit and in truth.' Let us, then, clearly understand that it is the will of Jesus Christ that those who receive Him in Holy Communion should labour unceasingly to divest themselves of the old man and clothe themselves with the new man; should not place any obstacle to the accomplishment of His desires, and disappoint His expectations, and lead a tepid life when we have the happiness of communicating frequently. O my Jesus, can I cause Thee such grief? No; I make a firm, and I hope unshaken resolution never to do so. I will neglect nothing to advance in the practice of every virtue, happy in being able thus to prove my gratitude for that infinite goodness, which caused Thee to institute this Sacrament of love.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us make interiorly all the acts of adoration, love, and gratitude which are due to Him on so many titles. Let us petition Him for those holy desires of communicating which are so pleasing to His Sacred Heart, and prepare the soul so well to receive Him worthily. Let us humble ourselves in His holy presence for the weakness of our desires, which inspire us with so little generosity to overcome our corrupt inclinations. Let us beg of Him to enkindle His holy love within us, and let us consecrate ourselves entirely to Him.

Resolution.—To combat carefully our predominant fault, as a method of preparation for Holy Communion.

Offering of the Resolution, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, abideth in Me and I in Him' (John vi. 57). 'I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. ii. 20).

Prayer.—Receive, O Lord, etc., page 54.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

NINETY-FOURTH MEDITATION.

NECESSITY OF HOLY COMMUNION.

'Amen, amen, I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you.'—JOHN vi. 54.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Let us once more represent to ourselves Jesus Christ surrounded by a great multitude listening to Him, and let us place ourselves among His disciples.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant me grace, O Jesus, to be deeply moved with the threats Thou dost pronounce against those who do not approach Thy sacred banquet, so that, if Thy divine love, growing weak within me, should not be sufficiently effective to attract me to It, the fear of offending Thee may at least hinder me from withdrawing myself entirely from It.

1*st Point.*—Jesus wills absolutely that we frequently receive Holy Communion.

Our Lord has so great a desire to give Himself to us in Holy Communion, that He uses every means to lead us to receive It. To the most pressing invitations He joins the most magnificent promises, but, His love still fearing lest we resist Him, goes on even to use threats, pronouncing against those who obstinately reject the advances of His love these terrible words: 'Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you' (John vi. 54). Let us conceive, if it be possible to do so, what an outrage the Sacred Heart of our Lord receives from the culpable in-

difference of so many souls who have nothing but disgust for the divine Eucharist. Let us understand the still greater grief those cause Him to experience whom He has presented with His choicest graces, and who, knowing well the necessity of receiving Him frequently, nevertheless keep away from the sacred banquet, refusing to submit to make the sacrifices His love demands of them in order to enable them to participate thereof worthily. 'Alas!' exclaims the pious author of the 'Imitation of Christ,' 'some tepid and cowardly people desire that their Communion should be deferred, lest they should be obliged thereby to keep a stricter watch over themselves' ('Imit'. B. iv. c. 20). The Sacred Heart of our divine Lord is deeply grieved at this: He wishes to console Himself with us; let us listen to Him addressing us as He formerly did His Apostles, when several of the disciples, shocked at the depth of the mystery of the Eucharist which He revealed to the people, retired from among His followers: 'Will you also go away?' (John vi. 68) . . . O my Jesus, the chief of Thy Apostles dictates the reply I ought to make Thee, and from my heart I repeat it after him: 'To whom shall I go, O Lord? Thou hast the words of eternal life, and we have believed and have known that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God' (John vi. 67, seq.). O Jesus, my only Life, if so many ungrateful hearts refuse to receive Thee, is it not a duty and a happiness for me to indemnify Thee, as far as I am able, for the outrages offered Thy tender charity, by the ardour of my love, the purity of my homages, and above all by the frequent participation of Thy august Sacrament?

2nd Point.—Jesus wishes that we should profit by Holy Communion.

Our divine Saviour calls us to His banquet, but He desires that we bring with us holy dispositions, and that we profit with the greatest care from the precious favours offered us in It. The fruit which Holy Communion should produce within us is to unite us in spirit to Jesus

Christ, giving us with Him a perfect conformity of judgment, sentiments, affections, and will. A soul that frequently receives Jesus Christ, and does not labour to be like unto Him in works, example, and doctrine, does not fulfil the end which our divine Saviour proposed to Himself, when He instituted this Sacrament of union and love. O my Saviour, do I not too often imitate these imperfect souls? Am I faithful, after having received Thee, in labouring to overcome my bad inclinations, that I may conduct myself according to Thy Spirit . . . Have pity on me, my divine Lord, it is Thee I have had the misfortune to offend, and it is to Thee I have recourse to obtain the strength to rise again, and to be preserved from falling in future; help me then, O infinite Goodness, I promise Thee to neglect nothing henceforth that may help me to profit by Thy divine Sacrament as abundantly as I should do.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the only source of the life of our souls. Let us thank Him for the love He has vouchsafed to testify for us, in pressing us by all sorts of motives to nourish ourselves with this adorable Sacrament. Let us make reparation to His Sacred Heart, outraged by the ingratitude of bad Christians, asking pardon for our own infidelities. Let us beg the grace to profit in future, as we should do, whenever we participate in the holy Eucharist.

Resolutions.—In order to profit by all our communions, to apply ourselves to the practice of all the virtues of our state, especially of those in which we are deficient.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life' (John vi. 69).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

NINETY-FIFTH CONTEMPLATION.

CURE OF THE DAUGHTER OF THE WOMAN OF CANAAN.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—'Jesus retired into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And behold a woman of Canaan, who came out of those coasts, crying out, said to Him: Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David, my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil. Who answered her not a word. . . . But she came and adored Him, saying, Lord help me. Who answering said: It is not good to take the bread of the children and to cast it to the dogs. But she said: Yea, Lord; for the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the table of their masters. Then Jesus answering, said to her: O woman, great is thy faith; be it done to thee as thou wilt; and her daughter was cured from that hour' (Matt. xv. 21, seq).

2*nd Prelude.*—Represent to yourself a street through which Jesus passed, accompanied by His apostles, when the woman of Canaan commenced to follow Him, then the house which He entered, to which she also came when she threw herself at His feet.

3*rd Prelude.* — Grant me grace, O Jesus, to know thoroughly the dispositions of Thy Sacred Heart towards those who pray to Thee, and what the dispositions are which Thou requirest from them.

1*st Point.*—Consider the persons. Our Lord Jesus Christ. We can always imagine Him full of kindness and amiable dignity. He is accompanied by His disciples. The woman of Canaan is following Him, her heart full of confidence; her deportment is that of a suppliant; the fervour of her prayer is manifested in every movement. Is our fervour to be compared to hers when we pray to Jesus to grant us some favour? We do not behold Him, as she did, it is true, but we know that He is really present as

God and as man in the most holy Sacrament; do we know how to employ the precious moments which we pass at the foot of His sacred Tabernacles?

2nd and 3rd Points.—Listen to the words, and consider the actions. The woman of Canaan cries out: 'O Lord, Thou Son of David, have pity on me, my daughter is grievously troubled by a devil' (Matt. xv. 22). Jesus answered her not a word. Why such treatment, my kind Master; will You reject her prayer? Oh no; Jesus refuses her not; He secretly increases the confidence of the petitioner. He wills that she should solicit again, in order to increase her merits, and to offer us a model of perseverance in prayer. The poor mother is not cast down; she addresses herself to the apostles, who approach their divin Master, saying to Him: 'Lord, send her away, for she crieth after us. And He answering said: I was not sent but to the sheep that are lost of the house of Israel' (Matt. xv. 23, 24). This woman belonged to the Gentiles. Scarcely had He finished speaking when behold the woman a second time threw herself at His feet; nothing has been able to shake her confidence in the power and goodness of Jesus Christ. 'Lord, help me,' she exclaims (Matt. xv. 25). The Sacred Heart of Jesus is moved at length. He speaks to the woman. But wilt Thou, O Lord, deprive her of all hope? Never have we heard from Thee such severe words. 'It is not good,' He says, 'to take the bread of the children and to cast it to the dogs' (Matt. xv. 26). These words were sufficient to overthrow, dispel, and crush the very strongest hope. But what cannot the knowledge of self and of Jesus Christ effect? The Canaanite is suddenly enlightened concerning her state: our Lord has described it to the life; but what does her state signify if the Sacred Heart of Jesus is that of a father? and such it is, since He speaks of His children. She will find even in her state a powerful reason for turning in her favour the reproach which Jesus has just spoken to her. 'Yea, Lord,' she answers Him, 'the whelps also eat of the crumbs that fall from the

table of their masters' (Matt. xv. 27). Let us meditate on the advantages this woman draws on herself by her humble sentiments; also on the holy readiness which she shows to give an irresistible power to her prayer; the place she takes at the feet of our Lord; the name by which she designates the favour she hopes for—*the crumbs*—and we shall conceive an idea of what she thought of herself, of the light in which she beheld Jesus Christ, of the greatness of her confidence, and of the necessity, so to speak, in which she placed the Sacred Heart of her divine Lord to grant her prayer. We shall afterwards listen with less astonishment to the exclamation remarkable even in the mouth of our Lord: 'O woman! great is thy faith; be it done to thee us thou wilt' (Matt. xv. 28). O Jesus, Thou dost hereby assure me that to pray with confidence, to pray hoping against hope itself, is to pray with authority, and to make it, as it were, impossible for Thee to refuse to grant us any request.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him with a lively faith and sincere humility as the sovereign Master of all heavenly gifts, acknowledging that we are quite unworthy to obtain any share of them. Let us, nevertheless, ask for all the graces we need; above all, for the spirit of prayer and humility, making use of the words of the woman of Canaan, that we may be favourably heard.

Resolution.—To offer up all our prayers to-day with a great deal of faith, humility, and confidence.

Offering of the Resolution, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—Sacred Heart of Jesus, ocean of goodness, have mercy on us.

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

NINETY-SIXTH CONTEMPLATION.

JESUS CURES THE DEAF AND DUMB MAN.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—'And again, going out of the coasts of Tyre, He came by Sidon to the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. And they bring to Him one deaf and dumb; and they besought Him, that He would lay His hand upon him. And taking him from the multitude apart, He put His fingers into his ears, and spitting, He touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, He groaned and said to him: Ephpheta, which is, Be thou opened. And immediately his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke right' (Mark vii. 31, seq.).

2*nd Prelude.*—Represent to yourself a road; see Jesus walking upon it, and the people placing before Him the deaf and dumb man.

3*rd Prelude.*—Divine Jesus, my soul is often deaf and dumb regarding the affairs of my salvation; deign to deliver me from this double infirmity through Thy infinite goodness.

1*st Point.*—Consider the persons. Behold our divine Saviour surrounded by His disciples; reflect for an instant on the sweetness, the sanctity, the amiable majesty which every movement and every feature manifests. What a happiness for us, if He should deign to engrave His sacred image within us in indelible characters! Let us look on the man they are bringing to Him; he is deaf and dumb; his miserable condition cannot fail to excite the compassion of our kind Master. Let us expose to Him in the same manner the infirmities of our soul. He will be equally moved at these.

2*nd and* 3*rd Points.*—Listen to the words and consider the actions. Jesus takes the deaf and dumb man who

has been brought to Him by the hand, and leads Him aside from the multitude. Let us follow Him in spirit, and examine well what He is about to do. He puts His fingers into the man's ears; then, spitting, He touches his tongue with saliva. Divine hands of my Saviour, apply also to my soul the remedies Thou knowest to be necessary for it. Jesus raises His eyes to heaven; then He utters a groan produced by the fervour of His prayer and the compassion with which our miseries inspire Him. After having prayed as man, He speaks as God, saying with authority, 'Ephpheta, that is, Be thou opened' (Mark vii. 34). The miracle is instantly worked—his ears are opened, his tongue is loosened, and he speaks distinctly. Let us beg of Jesus to look kindly on the weaknesses of our soul; it is deaf, for the words of life are often addressed to it without their attracting notice. Very often the sweet voice of our Lord makes itself heard within us, and we are not moved. Our soul is dumb, not knowing how to speak to God in prayer, nor of God to others. Jesus sees all this, and He loves us. We are the price of His Blood. He Himself invites us to call on His goodness. Let us, then, ask Him with confidence and earnestness for the cure of all our maladies and the remedy of all our miseries. Jesus forbids the witnesses of the miracle to speak of it to anyone; but the more He forbids it, the more they, penetrated with admiration, publish abroad His power and His glory. 'He hath done all things well,' they exclaim; 'He hath made both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak' (Mark vii. 37). If I am sufficiently faithful to permit our Blessed Lord to work in me all the good which His Sacred Heart desires, He will be glorified in my person; for the angels in heaven, and His true servants on earth, will magnify the wonders which His grace will have accomplished in me.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us render Him our homage of adoration and love, and praise Him for the miracles which His grace works every day in favour of such as are

well disposed. Let us humble ourselves at His feet for having, up to the present, profited so little by His goodness and by the desire He has to cure our souls. Let us speak to Him with confidence of all our spiritual wants, praying Him to help us, and to draw from them an increase of His glory.

Resolutions.—To raise our heart to Jesus frequently in the day, praying Him to heal our spiritual infirmities. To be very recollected and faithful to grace, in order to second the workings of God within us to our very utmost.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean' (Luke v. 12).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

NINETY-SEVENTH MEDITATION.

JESUS CHRIST WISHES TO BE KNOWN.

'And Jesus came into the quarters of Cesarea Philippi; and He asked His disciples, saying: Whom do men say that the Son of Man is? But they said: Some John the Baptist, and other some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. Jesus saith to them: But whom do you say that I am? Simon Peter answered and said: Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.'—MATT. xvi. 13, seq.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Figure to yourself the place our Lord has just visited, accompanied by His disciples.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant me grace, O Jesus, to know intimately Who Thou art, to unite myself to Thee with all my heart, that so I may share in the precious graces with which Thou dost reward those whose faith in Thee is lively and practical.

1*st Point.*—St. Peter recognises Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God.

'Jesus asked His disciples, saying: Whom do men say that the Son of Man is?' (Matt. xvi. 15). Our Lord was not in ignorance as to what was said of Him, or what was thought of Him; His object in putting this question to His Apostles was not, therefore, to find that out, but rather to draw their attention to an important subject, and pass on to the second question: 'But Whom do you say that I am?' (Matt. xvi. 15). What feelings must not these words have raised in the hearts of the Apostles! What should we have felt had we been in their place! St. Peter, in the name of them all, replies: 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God' (Matt. xvi. 16). This confession was dictated by faith, respect, and love, three sentiments which it ought to stir up within us, if our dispositions towards Jesus are like unto those of St. Peter; let us try to penetrate ourselves with them, repeating from the very depth of our heart: Yes, Lord, Thou art Christ; Thou hast been consecrated, by God the Father, King and Priest from all eternity, to offer up to Him a sacrifice worthy of Himself, and to reign for ever over the holy nation. I believe that Thou art the Son of the living God, Thou art God, equal to Thy Father. Thou art hidden, it is true, under the veils of Thy sacred humanity; but, nevertheless, I know and believe that Thou art God. After these acts, or similar ones, let us consider how worthy this Son of God, our sovereign Master, is of all our homage, but above all, let us endeavour to open our heart to all the love with which the qualities of Saviour and Christ ought to inspire us towards Him.

2nd Point.—Jesus rewards the faith of St. Peter.

'And Jesus answering said to Him: Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but My Father Who is in heaven. And I say to thee: that thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build My Church' (Matt. xvi. 17, 18). Two subjects for reflection present themselves here through these words: 'Thou art blessed, because flesh and blood hath not revealed

this to Thee, but My Father Who is in heaven.' Jesus Christ reminds us that faith is a gift of God; a gratuitous gift, which we cannot merit, but with which we are bound to co-operate, and which the divine goodness perfects within us in proportion to our fidelity. What gratitude do we not owe to God for this precious gift! with what care should we not labour to increase it day by day! Our Lord says to Peter: Blessed art thou. Indeed, when our faith is lively and practical, it insures our happiness both here and hereafter. The rest of the reply of Jesus Christ proves His goodness and the divine generosity with which He recompenses fidelity to His grace. 'And I say to thee,' He says, 'that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church' (Matt. xvi. 18). St. Peter has confessed the divinity of Jesus; our divine Lord immediately rewards his faith by raising him to the highest dignity in His Church, and filling his soul with the graces corresponding to the importance of the office He has confided to him. It is thus that our dear Lord loves to requite the fidelity of His servants; let us understand, if this be possible, how happy we are to belong to Him, and how much it concerns our best interests to correspond faithfully with His graces.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us unite with St. Peter in confessing that He is truly Christ the Son of God, and let us adore Him as such with the most profound respect and tender love. Let us thank Him for the precious gift of faith, which He has bestowed upon us without our having been able to merit it. Should our conscience reproach us with not having profited as we ought to have done by so precious a gift, let us humble ourselves and ask pardon for our neglect, begging our Lord to enliven our faith and render us worthy of His divine rewards.

Resolutions.—To animate all our actions to-day with a spirit of lively faith, especially those which immediately regard the service of God.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'Lord Jesus I believe that 'Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God' (Matt. xvi. 18).

Prayer.—Soul of Christ, etc., page 12.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

NINETY-EIGHTH MEDITATION.

JESUS MAKES ST. PETER HEAD OF HIS CHURCH.

'And I say to thee: That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall also be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.'—MATT. xvi. 18, 19.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude*, page 251.

2*nd Prelude.*—Grant, O Lord, that I may appreciate as fully as I ought the grace Thou hast conferred upon me by making me a child of Thy Church, and vouchsafe to attach me inviolably to her.

1*st Point.*—The Church of Jesus Christ is infallible.

'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it' (Matt. xvi. 18). We live in an unhappy age when heresy, indifference about salvation, and ignorance resulting from these, are making the most terrible ravages; hell is being peopled daily by a prodigious number of persons, who are damning themselves by following the false doctrines of the teachers of error, or the perverse maxims of the world. In the midst of this universal danger there is but one way to be saved; that is, union with the Church. What gratitude do we not, therefore, owe to God for having caused us to be born in the bosom of that Church; for having provided us from our infancy with holy instructions on the truths which she teaches; and for having overwhelmed us with

all the blessings of which she is the source! Let us praise the Lord for such great benefits, and say to Him from the bottom of our heart: My God, I firmly believe that all which Thy Church teaches me is truth itself, because Thou Who art the eternal Truth hast revealed it to her, and hast rendered her infallible. I firmly believe that if I do what she tells me in Thy name, I am more certain of arriving at eternal happiness than if an angel had pointed out for me the road to heaven. Let us earnestly beseech our Lord to strengthen within us these just sentiments, and to grant us the grace to be worthy children of the Church; that tender mother, who is sensibly afflicted at the loss of her children precipitating themselves into eternal misery; let us try to console her by our fidelity and zeal in procuring the conversion of sinners, as far as we shall have it in our power to do so.

2nd Point.—The Church of Jesus Christ is founded on St. Peter.

'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church. . . I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall also be bound in heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven' (Matt. xvi. 18, 19). In meditating on these words, we ought to feel ourselves animated with attachment to our sovereign Pontiff, the successor of St. Peter, who like that apostle is the foundation which sustains the entire Church, and the inheritor of the powers granted to the first Head of the Sacred College. The chair of St. Peter is the centre of Catholic unity; all hearts truly Christian ought to rally around it, and all the united efforts of heresy and impiety cannot prevail against them, if they be faithful in not letting themselves be separated from it. 'Wheresoever the body shall be,' says Jesus Christ, 'thither will the eagles also be gathered together' (Luke xvii. 37). He teaches us by these words that in the times of trial, during which He permits His Church to be violently assaulted, His faithful, who are represented by the eagles,

ought to be gathered together around the chair of St. Peter, for the body can be nowhere where its Head is not; the Church can be built only upon the foundation-stone which Jesus Christ Himself has laid. O my adorable Saviour! I am a child of Thy true Church, of Thy Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman Church, out of which there is no salvation to be found. I firmly believe, O my God, that she is the pillar and the ground of truth. Draw closer and closer still the ties which bind me to her. Holy Roman Church! Church founded on Peter, and governed by the successor of Peter! May my right hand be forgotten if I ever forget the fidelity I have sworn to Thee! During my entire life I will make it my glory to belong to Thee, and my sweetest consolation at the hour of my death shall be to repeat that I believe in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, and that I die a child of hers.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us adore Him as the true Son of God, and render Him lively acts of thanksgiving for having founded His Church on earth, for having given her a visible head, and ensured for her a lasting infallibility. Let us renew our promises of attachment to this holy Church, and pray to Jesus most earnestly never to permit the discourses of the impious, or the suggestions of the devil, to weaken within us the love we ought to have for her.

Resolutions.—Often to produce during the day acts of faith and attachment to the Church. To pray for the conversion of infidels, heretics, and sinners.

Offering of the Resolutions, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—I desire to live and die in the bosom of the Holy Catholic Church, my mother. 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it' (Matt. xvi. 18).

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

NINTY-NINTH MEDITATION.

THE SPIRIT OF FAITH OUGHT TO REGULATE OUR SENTIMENTS AND CONDUCT.

'From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things . . . and be put to death . . . And Peter, taking Him, began to rebuke Him, saying: Lord, be it far from Thee; this shall not be unto Thee. Who turning said to Peter: Go behind Me, satan; thou art a scandal unto Me, because thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men.'—MATT. xvi. 21, seq.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Represent to yourself our Lord walking in the midst of His disciples, and a crowd of people following Him.

2*nd Prelude.*—Penetrate me, O Lord, with a lively faith, which may lead me to judge of all things according to Thy divine Spirit, and teach me to despise the voice of nature, when my eternal interests are involved.

1*st Point.*—Our judgments ought to be conformed to the spirit of Jesus Christ. 'Thou savourest not the things that are of God, but the things that are of men' (Matt. xvi. 23). Men regard humiliations and sufferings as real evils, and try to preserve their friends from these, and when they cannot succeed, they soothe them and pity them; but they who have the Spirit of God raise their eyes higher; they behold the precious advantages by which trials are followed, and although they may be filled with tender compassion for those they see suffering, and make use of all possible means to alleviate and soothe their pains, they do not injure them by mistaken tenderness, or turn them from the holy path of Calvary, because they desire before all the glory of God and the salvation of

those they love. O my Jesus, replenish me with Thy Spirit; the world calls the holy firmness inspired by Thy grace severity; but the world condemns that which it knows not: it is ignorant of the sweetness and love of Thy Sacred Heart, and of the convictions of Thy true friends; it has not beheld Thee weeping at the tomb of Lazarus, nor has it contemplated Mary plunged in a sea of sorrow at the foot of Thy Cross. As for myself, who have so often meditated on these mysteries of love, I know how I ought to regard the judgments of the world on these matters. Teach me, then, ever to despise them, and grant that, knowing the value of sufferings endured for Thy love, I may face with resignation, and even with joy, the tribulations with which it shall please Thee to visit me, and all who are dear to me, that so we may attain that eternal happiness promised to all those who shall have been like unto Thee on earth.

2nd Point.—We ought to carry our cross and follow Jesus Christ.

'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up His cross, and follow Me' (Matt. xvi. 24.) Who is He that speaks, and to what does He engage us? He Who speaks is Jesus, our Guide and our Light; He Who has said of Himself: I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life' (John xiv. 6). It is Jesus, the well-beloved Son of the Father, our Saviour, our Shepherd, and our divine Sovereign. It is Jesus, Whose 'yoke is sweet and burden light' (Matt. xi. 30), when they are borne with love. To what, then, does He engage us? To follow Him in the holy paths of the Cross. My adorable Lord, why, then, is the word *Cross* so revolting to me? Has not that sacred word sweetened for Thy friends the bitter waters of tribulation? Is not the Cross the consolation and treasure of Thy true disciples? O Cross of My Saviour, crimsoned with His adorable Blood! divine Cross, which will appear to me at the last day emblazoned with glory; sacred Tree, which has borne the price of my redemption; trophy of the love

of my God, and pledge of my hope, I salute and embrace Thee, never more to abandon Thee: yes, Cross of my Jesus, thou art and shalt ever be precious unto me, since it is only in carrying thee that I can walk in the footsteps of my Saviour, and arrive at the eternal happiness He purchased for me when He expired in thy arms.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us render Him our homage of adoration and love, begging Him to fill us with His Spirit, and to discover to us the value of the tribulations endured for His sake. Let us humble ourselves at His feet for having exhibited up to the present so little courage in bearing our cross. Let us offer ourselves generously to bear all the crosses His love may send us, praying Him to choose them for us Himself, and to deign to carry them with us.

Resolution.—To accept willingly any trials that may befall us during the course of the day.

Offering of the Resolution, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—Jesus, my adorable Lord, 'I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou shalt go' (Matt. viii. 19).

Prayer.—Receive, O Lord, etc., page 54.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

HUNDREDTH MEDITATION.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SALVATION.

'He that will save his life, shall lose it; and he that shall lose his life for My sake, shall find it. For what doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?'—MATT. xvi. 25, 26.

Preparatory Prayer, page 1.

1*st Prelude.*—Same as the preceding one, page 257.

2nd Prelude.—Grant me grace, O Lord, to work out my salvation whatever it may cost me.

1st Point.—The loss of our salvation would be the greatest of all losses.

'What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?' (Matt. xvi. 26). God has not created us to remain for ever in this world; the period of this life is but a moment of trial which will soon come to an end; placed between an eternity of happiness and an eternity of misery, everyone is forced to choose one or the other, for there is no midway between these two extremes. My choice was made long ago, but how miserable I shall be if, neglecting to make use of the efficacious means necessary to arrive at a happy eternity, of which I ought never to lose sight, I should fail in the great, important, and one only affair of my salvation! O, my Jesus, never permit this! Penetrate me with a salutary fear which may lead me to watch and pray without ceasing, lest I allow myself to be led away from the right path. What are the united interests of this world to me compared to my eternal salvation? What does it signify if I be approved of or contradicted, if I enjoy the goods of fortune and the comforts of this life or be deprived of them, if I be in health or in sickness, in suffering or in joy, provided I but save my soul in the end? Yesterday has passed and is gone, the present moment is running away; in like manner my life is passing rapidly. I shall soon arrive at its term, and what will it avail me then to have possessed the whole world, if I come to lose my soul? O my good Master! Thou wilt not permit this. Thou hast given me the means with which to reach heaven, Thou hast opened unto me Thy Sacred Heart, that I may find therein a safe asylum from my enemies; grant that I may ever be faithful to the advances of Thy love, and that I may ensure by my works the right Thou hast given me to Thy heavenly inheritance.

2nd Point.—The loss of salvation is irreparable.

'What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?' (Matt. xvi. 26). The losses we sustain during life may be repaired, at least to a certain point; it is not so with our eternal salvation: that great affair once lost, there is no longer any resource left. On whatever side the tree falls, there shall it remain. Terrible words, which caused the hermits in the deserts to tremble with fear. It is certain that there will come for me a moment in which my eternal destiny will be irrevocably fixed; shall I be then put in possession of heaven or precipitated into hell? Of this I know nothing; but this I do know, that when once that decisive moment shall have passed away, time for me will be at an end. There will be no longer any means of extricating myself from the abyss if I have had the misfortune of falling into it; no longer any fear of losing heaven if I have had the happiness of being admitted into it. O my God! penetrate my soul with these great and important truths; dispose me rather to lose everything than risk my eternal salvation. If I had two souls, I would sacrifice one, and the other would remain to me; but as I have only one, I am resolved to save it, cost what it may.

Colloquy with our Lord.—Let us thank Him for granting us the grace to meditate on the importance of our salvation, and for giving us the time and the means of saving our souls. If there has ever been a time in our life when we incurred His anger, let us thank Him for not having in that moment withdrawn us from this world. Let us make firm and generous resolutions, and implore our Lord never to permit us to be unfaithful to Him.

Resolution.—To surmount generously the repugnances which may make themselves felt within us to the exact accomplishment of our duties.

Offering of the Resolution, page 3.

Spiritual Bouquet.—'What will it profit a man if he gain

the whole world and suffer the loss of his own soul?' (Matt. xvi. 26). I have but one soul, and I will by the grace of God save it, cost what it may.

Prayer.—Pater Noster.

Examen of the Meditation, page 4.

END OF VOL. I.

246.723
Si84
44458
SISTER OF MERCY (Tr.).
AUTHOR
Contemplations and Meditations
TITLE on the Public Life of Our
Lord Jesus Christ. Vol. I.
DATE LOANED
BORROWER'S NAME
ROOM NUMBER
STORAGE - CBPL
Schmidt
Silva
Steve
Caulfe
W
2/4/4
44458